



# Two in Tuscany with a Donkey

A Tale of Artless Adventure

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A Manuscript written in 1912  
by Adelaide Pearson

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Andrew L. Phelan, editor





Adelaide Pearson, Author.  
(1875-1960)

Author, world traveler, photographer, cinematographer, social activist and cultural entrepreneur, Adelaide Pearson was all these things, often simultaneously, during her long and productive life. Born to a wealthy family in the Boston area she traveled widely beginning at an early age, always writing about, photographing and making movies of her travels and adventures. This book includes one of her early manuscripts (reproduced true to the form it was found in), many of her photographs and some interesting details of the rich and varied life she led. The story of her travels by donkey cart in the hills of Tuscany gives readers some wonderful and charming insights into a time long vanished and a place that has changed in the ensuing century since the tale was written.



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Two in Tuscany  
with a Donkey.

A Tale of Artless Adventure

*Two in Tuscany with a Donkey*

A manuscript written in 1912 by  
Adelaide Pearson

Founder of Rowantrees Pottery in Blue Hill, Maine

Andrew L. Phelan, editor





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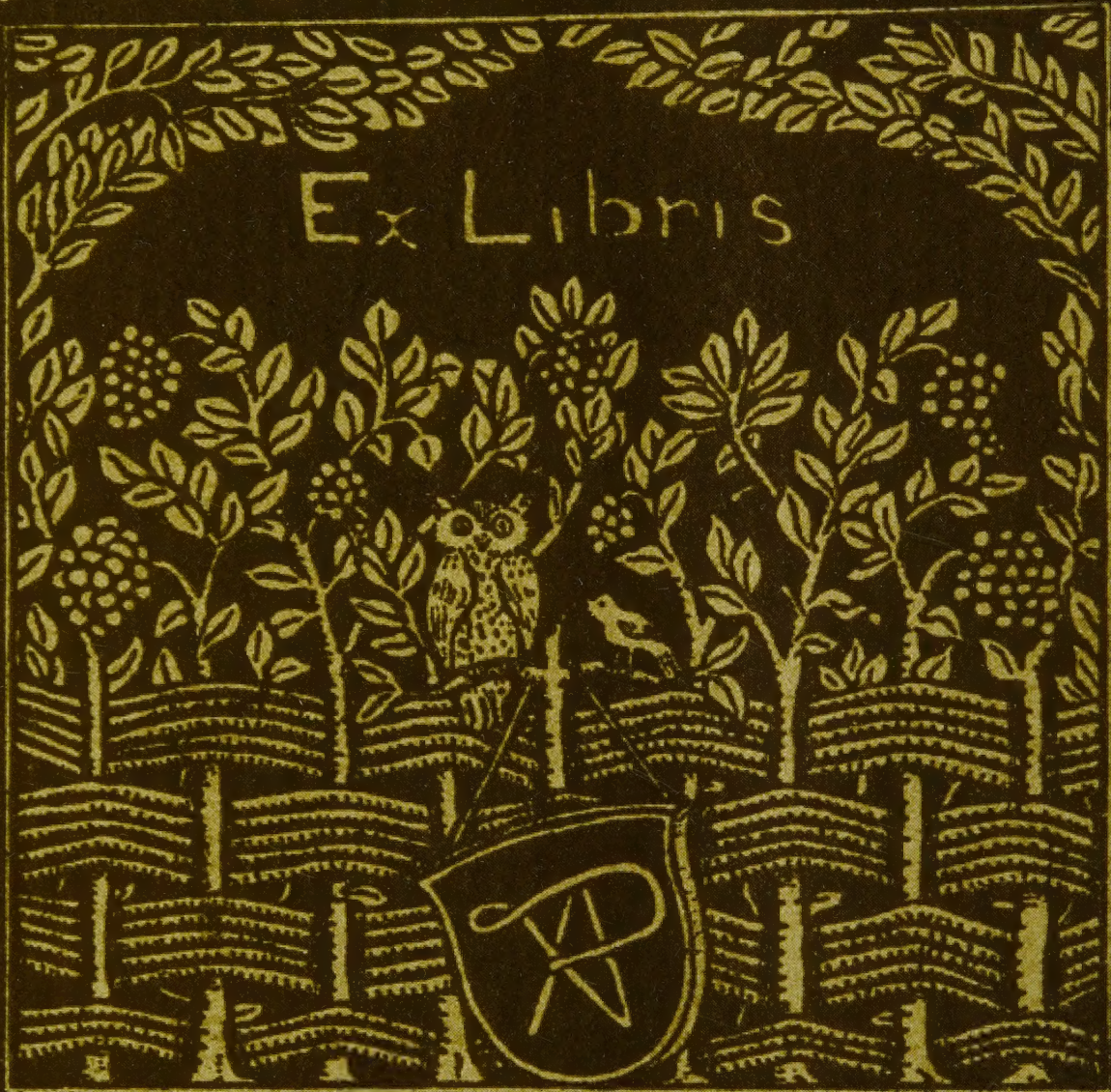


\* I \* WOULD \* BUT \* AS \*

NOT \* AS

I \* COULD

Ex Libris



ADELAIDE \* PEARSON

ACQUIRED A.D.



*Facing page.* Adelaide Pearson's bookplate.

# How the Story Came to be Published

*Two in Tuscany with a Donkey* was written by Adelaide Pearson before World War I - probably in 1912 and 1913. Never published it resided for years – probably for more than 75 years - in the files at her home on Union Street in Blue Hill, Maine. That was also the location of the pottery she founded in 1934, Rowantrees Pottery. While the pottery is no longer active, the archives remain there and it was in these archives that the manuscript of *Two in Tuscany* was found. Why I was using the archives and decided to publish the manuscript is worth briefly recounting.

My first introduction to Adelaide Pearson, had nothing to do with her writing, and it happened in a very oblique fashion about 1994. My father, Linn L. Phelan, was a potter, and had died a couple of years earlier. I had begun going through his personal papers, notebooks and day-books. In the papers I found a draft of a letter he had written to Sheila Varnum in 1986, the owner of Rowantrees Pottery in Blue Hill, Maine, when she was having some problems with her glazes. (He had learned of her problems from his cousin, then living in Gouldsboro, Maine, who sent him clippings from the local papers.) After offering technical advice, my father closed the letter by saying:

*Some time later I will try to write you about my 3 year sojourn & learning experience in Blue Hill and how Pearson contacted Arthur E. Baggs - of Ohio State - & why he recommended me for the job of Production man & teacher...!*

*With nostalgia,*

*Linn L. Phelan*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Linn L. Phelan, draft of a letter to Sheila Varnum, dated October 3, 1986. Collection of the author.

Since I had not known anything about his work at Rowantrees that letter captured my interest and I subsequently began additional research on my father and his time at Rowantrees Pottery. My father's day-books from the time were filled with references to Adelaide and to Laura Paddock, Pearson's partner in the Rowantrees Pottery and then, in his files, I found additional correspondence between my father and the two women. After contacting Sheila Varnum, I made my first visit to Rowantrees and spent several wonderful days visiting with her, making my first foray in the extensive archives, while becoming fast friends in the process. She was very helpful and interested in what I was doing. That research led to my writing an article, published in *Ceramics Monthly* in 1998 about Rowantrees Pottery.<sup>2</sup>

Sheila and I remained friends and kept in touch over the next few years. In 2003, I had a student who wanted to do an internship in a production pottery and I contacted Sheila about the possibility. She was happy to oblige and the student, a wonderfully talented Japanese-born potter, Yoko Sekino, went to Blue Hill and spent three very productive months with Sheila learning a lot and becoming friends in the process.

A few years later, I started thinking about more fully documenting the story of Rowantrees Pottery and contacted Sheila about the possibility of doing a book on its history. After we talked about it, she was delighted. The future of the pottery that had been an integral part of her life was in limbo. She was happy that someone might be interested in writing a book documenting the history of Rowantrees. So we committed to the project and the book, *Following the Brick Path*, was its result.

Sheila introduced me to Dr. Anne Dzamba who had organized many of the files, and had previously written an article about Adelaide Pearson in 1985.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Dzamba is a great admirer of Adelaide Pearson. In our extended conversations Anne extolled the many exciting travels and prior accomplishments of Pearson, before she founded Rowantrees Pottery. Over the next several of years I made a number of trips to Blue Hill and spent much time talking with Sheila and going through the files, greatly assisted by Sheila's niece, Anita Babson-Campbell. My research was largely focused on the establishment of the pottery, but, during several of the trips as I explored the files and worked on the manuscript that became *Following the Brick Path, the Story of Rowantrees Pottery*, it became increasingly difficult to ignore the other parts of Pearson's remarkable life. Since Sheila very graciously allowed me unfettered access to the extensive collection of material that had been maintained, which included personal and professional letters, photographic albums, business records, boxes of photographs and negatives along with miscellaneous objects. Thus it was, that as I researched my book on the pottery during the next three years, I became increasingly convinced that all the material on Pearson showed a life that warranted additional attention beyond the establishment of Rowantrees.

Pearson was 59 when she began Rowantrees and she had lived a wonderfully rich, dynamic and accomplished life before beginning the pottery. Founding the pottery was a suitable, and very tangible, culmination of her life, but even if she had not founded the pottery, her accomplishments would have been quite remarkable. And so, possibilities for other projects began forming in my mind even before I finished the book on Rowantrees.

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<sup>2</sup> Rowantrees Pottery, *Ceramics Monthly*, February 1998, Vol.46, # 2

<sup>3</sup> Anne Olga Dzamba, "Adelaide Pearson of Blue Hill, Maine," *Women Art Educators II*, edited by Mary Ann Stankiewicz and Enid Zimmerman, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, April 1985.



The question for me was: how to shape a project that would be manageable without trying to write a comprehensive biography since I was (and remain) convinced that the task of a biography of Adelaide Pearson should fall to another person.

While I had briefly looked at Pearson's manuscript, *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey* early in my research, I did not immediately read it completely, choosing to simply skim it. As a visual person, I was initially more fascinated by the photographic albums that Pearson had left behind. However, I could not quite figure out how to shape the voluminous scope of her photographic work into a manageable project. The sheer volume and diversity of the photographic material, consisting of scrapbooks, lantern slides, glass negatives, and negatives along with the number of unorganized prints and negatives (both on glass and on film) were daunting. Her films, another source of material, had already been transferred to the Northeast Film Archive and were, at the time, being studied, and written about, by a New York University graduate student, Kimberly Tarr, as her masters thesis project.<sup>4</sup>

However, when I was nearing the end of my research on Rowantrees Pottery in late 2008, I found the time to sit and read *Two in Tuscany*, and was struck by its directness, charm and insights (both cultural and personal) it presented to the reader about a trip taken nearly a century earlier by an American woman in Italy, then still a young country and a Europe still basking in the extended peace that would shortly be shattered. It also presents clues about the character of the woman who would later establish Rowantrees Pottery. And it seemed a manageable project – one that could be completed in a single volume. It was also one that allowed me to use some of the insights from my previous research. So I conceived of the book that you are holding, one that would let Adelaide Pearson's delightful journey become available to other readers since the story was never published.

While she wrote a number of stories for children and kept journals to accompany her many trips she only published one book in her lifetime, *The Laughing Lion*, published ten years later in 1922.<sup>5</sup> But, to me, *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey* cried out to be published, and so, here it is. Adelaide wrote charmingly and insightfully. Many of the views expressed about travel by Adelaide seemed very contemporary and to me, likely to strike a sympathetic and knowing chord with a reader in the twenty first century.

My only contribution is to place the story in the larger context of Adelaide's remarkable life in the foreword and afterword. The story is hers.

Andrew L. Phelan, Norman, Oklahoma, February 2011

4 Kimberly Tarr, *Round the World and Back Again: Mapping the Cultural and Historical Significance of the Adelaide Pearson Film Collection*. Unpublished masters thesis, New York University, 2009.

5 Adelaide Pearson, *The Laughing Lion*, with illustrations by Winifred Bromhill, 1922, New York, E.P. Dutton & Company






**This Page:** In the background mother Lulu Newton Pearson, an early photo of Adelaide c. 1890, her grandfather Woodman Wheeler Newton, and a photograph of the house late in the 19th Century.

**Opposite Page:** An undated photograph of Adelaide c. 1900.





# **Chapter I**

## **Foreword – About Adelaide Pearson (1875-1960)**

### **Her Early Life**

Adelaide Pearson was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1875, to a wealthy manufacturer, Charles Henry Pearson (1849-1928), the treasurer of Chelsea Clock Company, an inventor and a Massachusetts state senator, and Lulu Newton Pearson, an amateur classicist, who died when Adelaide was a young woman. Adelaide and her sister Lucy were educated at home under their mother's careful tutelage. Adelaide was given a very good education by governesses, spent four years in a private day school and had music teachers providing instrumental instruction. In fact she had such a thorough musical education she harbored intentions of becoming a concert performer, a goal apparently nixed by her father.<sup>6</sup> We know few details about her mother, who died at a relatively young age, but it is clear that Lulu Newton Pearson, as well as her maternal grandparents, Lucy and Woodman Wheeler Newton, of Blue Hill, from whom Adelaide later inherited the house that became her home and the site of Rowantrees Pottery, were important influences. And, if we can judge by surviving letters and photographs, she and her sister spent a great deal of time with the maternal grandparents at the Blue Hill house.

Early photographs of the house there show her Grandfather Newton with a viola and Adelaide with a violin

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<sup>6</sup> Tarr says she was given the opportunity to study violin in Berlin with Joseph Joachim and in Paris with Martin Pierre Marsick. From the photographs cited above we do know her mother's family was very much interested in music and she certainly seems to have been well trained.





An undated photograph of Adelaide c. 1890-1900 in the Newton House in Blue Hill.



or at the piano so it is clear that music was an integral part of the Blue Hill (Newton) household. Along with her musical talents, she was a person of very diverse and widely ranging interests, including mechanical ones and apparently she was something of a tomboy. Pearson claimed she learned photography (including the developing process) by the age of eight, took a course in auto mechanics in 1903 and drove an automobile with gusto, even into her old age. Some of her adventuresome nature clearly came from her father, who in addition to his duties at the Chelsea Clock works and involvement in politics, was something of an inventor in, of all things, munitions!<sup>7</sup> This very interesting combination of diverse interests in her family (along with their encouragement and support) allowed her to develop into the remarkable person she later became. She refused to conform to the narrow gender stereotypes that defined (and constricted) the lives of young women of that time.

Adelaide Pearson never married and, as was customary of many single women of her time and social status, she became a social reformer involving herself in a number of projects. But, they were not necessarily those that might have been expected of one having her privileged background. A person of intense curiosity, Pearson was not one to seek a sheltered life in the Boston ladies sewing circles, nor in the genteel social projects favored by others of her social class and gender.

When asked about this much later, in response she said, *"All this [the activities in the ladies sewing circles] seemed futile to me...and so at 28 years old I started working with the Children's Aid Society."*<sup>8</sup> Her volunteer work included the Boston Children's Aid Society from 1903-06, and later, in 1909, (three years before the Tuscany trip) she began working at the Dennison House, a project of the College Settlement Movement.<sup>9</sup> Founded by Vida Dutton Scudder (1861-1954), this movement was influenced by the ideas of John Ruskin (1819-1900), who lectured and wrote about the responsibility for people of privilege to assist those with few resources. The College Settlement Movement had the aim of breaking down the barriers between workers and the so called 'leisure class.' This was in keeping with the progressive politics embraced by Pearson. Dennison House, founded in 1892, offered a program of activities ranging from basket weaving to dancing and lace making for the newly arrived European and Near Eastern immigrants of Boston. Dennison House created the Folk Handicrafts Council in 1914 for the purposes of generating earnings by marketing the products of the traditional craft skills of the immigrants.<sup>10</sup>

Upon their death, the Newton grandparents left the Blue Hill house to Adelaide and her sister. With happy memories of her time at the Blue Hill house when her grandparents were alive, after inheriting it (and after buying her sister's share) she continued to spend a great deal of time there during the summers. After her father

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7 This interesting bit of information comes from a letter Adelaide wrote to her father, dated June 5, 1921 (written from Sicily while on one of her many trips abroad) in which she says: "I am more than interested in what you write of the fuse. That firing-pin spring is certainly a very fuzzy thing to adjust. I suppose the universality of functioning in both high and low powered guns has been established by now. What a triumph!"

8 Adelaide Pearson to Mabel S. Robinson. 1927, collection Sheila Varum. Robinson was an instructor in the Home Study English Department, Columbia University Juvenile Writing Program.

9 Dzamba

10 Scudder was educated at the Girls Latin School in Boston, Smith College and Oxford University (where she came in contact with Ruskin's ideas), taught English at Wellesley College between 1887-1928 and was the author of a number of books on religion, history, politics and literature. She founded the Church League for Industrial Democracy and was a member of the Socialist Party. Scudder also joined the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, an Episcopalian group of laywomen, in 1889, five years after its founding. The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross was a spiritually-minded and socially concerned organization. Pearson would also join this organization and remained active in it for the remainder of her life.

Via Monteleone 55  
Palermo

Dearest Papa -

It's a long time since I got a letter from you but a post-card from Lucy telling of the inauguration keeps me from worrying. I suppose lots of mail is lost - but I don't see how. If any gets through I <sup>should</sup> suppose all would.

Yesterday we sent a cablegram to Mary Field via "Loulaina". Mary has had a nervous break-down,   
X too. She took one of those South American cruises of six weeks but it wasn't long enough & Caro got a letter saying she would like to join us (if we were willing) if the doctor sent her off again. So, of course Caro wanted to let her know she would meet her gladly at any time.   
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

We have been in Palermo nearly a week now but as I had three large fillings come out of my teeth en route from Taormina I've been spending most of my time at the dentist's. One can't make appointments here but has to go & wait hours for

This undated letter from Adelaide Pearson to her father refers to one Mary Field "...who had a nervous breakdown too." This letter and the one on the facing page would seem to indicate Pearson did travel for health. Interestingly, the blacked out words appear to have been done by Pearson herself.



died in 1928, she ultimately made that house into her permanent residence. When she was not traveling, she was a resident of Blue Hill.

## Pearson's Obsession with Travel

Pearson became a habitual and intrepid world traveler at an early age. She traveled to Europe for the first time while still in her teens, and so at 37 when she wrote *Two in Tuscany*, she was already a very, very experienced traveler with at least 20 years of travel experience from her first European tour. It also seems that she subsequently traveled every year of her life.<sup>11</sup> Certainly, at the time she wrote *Two in Tuscany* travel was one of the major focal points in her life and she devoted a great deal of time to it. As an inquisitive person, she traveled for pleasure and she traveled for adventure, but apparently, based on some letters, she also traveled for health. In a letter written by one of her later traveling companions, Caroline Field, the following appears: "... while making a good beginning to return her health has by no means accomplished the end for which she came."<sup>12</sup>

But, whatever the problems with her health were, there doesn't seem to be any evidence that she was ever incapacitated by problems with her health, and with the exception of one reference to dental problems in her letters, she seems to have enjoyed remarkably fine health until late in life.<sup>13</sup> The only thing that seems to have interfered with her travels were two world wars!

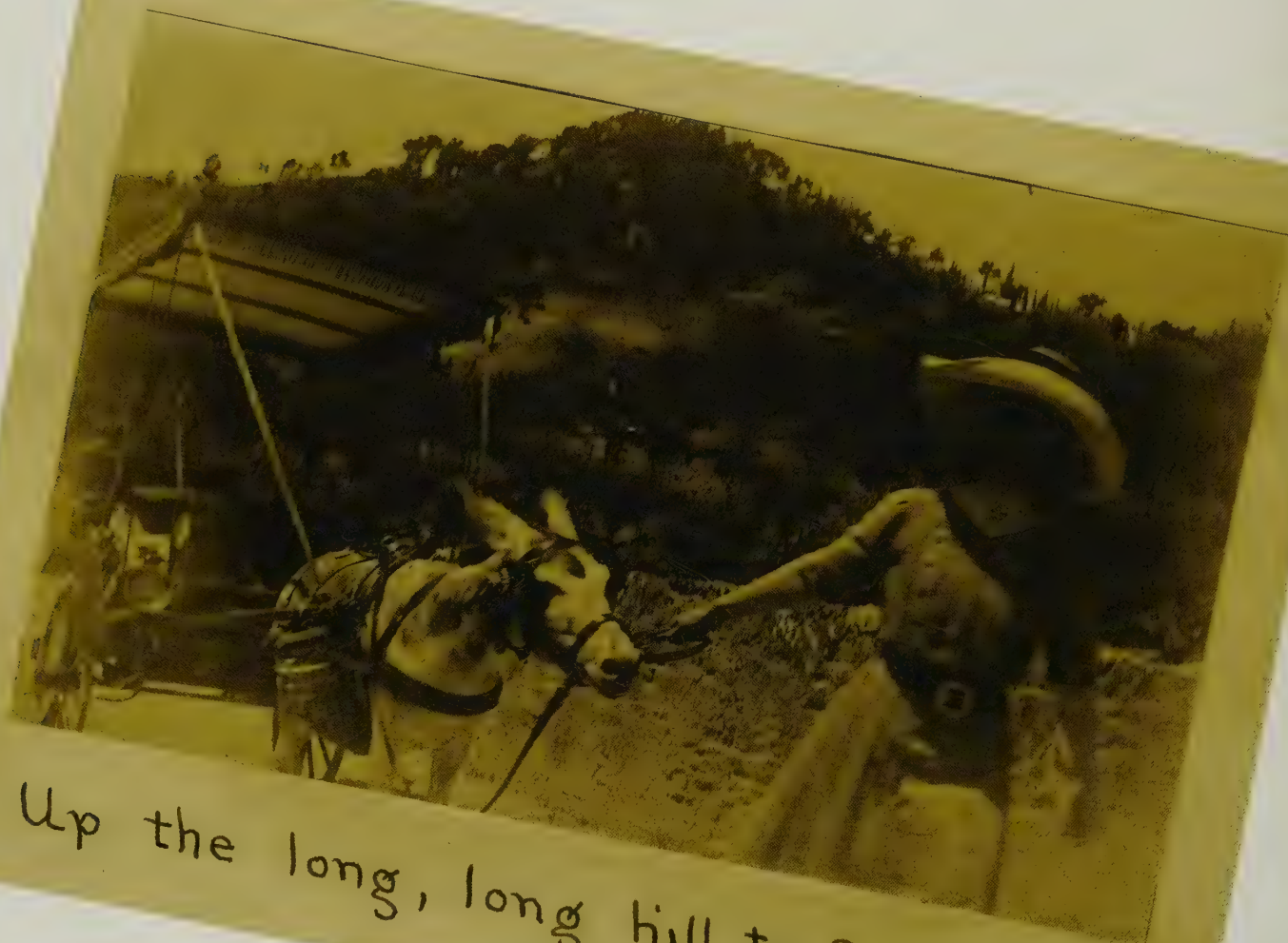
<sup>11</sup> Dzamba

<sup>12</sup> Caroline J. Field, letter to Adelaide's father from Naples, dated May 15, 1921. Sheila Varnum collection.

<sup>13</sup> Adelaide Pearson, letter to her father from Palermo, April 6, 1921. Sheila Varnum collection. In this letter she mentions the problems she had getting two teeth filled.

Prior to writing the story of *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey*, Pearson had spent a good deal of time in Italy. In a letter written a few months before her death noting her decision to live in Blue Hill, she said: "...I owned a beautiful home in Brookline and a lovely apartment in Florence, Italy..."<sup>14</sup> Not only was she fond of Italy, but the evidence suggests she had formed some very strong friendships with people there, particularly in the city of Florence.

And it is in that city that *Two in Tuscany* starts.



Up the long, long hill to San Godenzo

Photographs on this page and the next:

Adelaide Pearson, from the manuscript; *Two in Tuscany*

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<sup>14</sup> Adelaide Pearson, letter to Frank Beckwith, October 20, 1959. Sheila Varnum Collection





## Chapter 2

# The Story of the Journey

While the story of *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey* was written almost a century ago, Pearson begins the tale with a lament that current travelers can identify with, that of the propensity of tour operators to herd their wards from one famous place (or sight) to another. Of being “hurried from city to city” as Pearson put it on the first page of the manuscript. But the inspiration for the journey apparently came from a suggestion made (on page two) in the course of a lunch at the Y.W.C.A. in Florence, whereby she and her companion decide there is another way to see Tuscany - traveling via donkey cart.

Nanni's smile of gratitude

Pearson is accompanied by a woman who we know very little about except what is revealed in this manuscript and who is always referred to as the *Signorina*. There are photographs of her in the account and she is an attractive looking Italian woman either younger or approximately the same age as Pearson. But she is always referred to as the *Signorina*, she is never given either a first, nor a family name. We do learn that she is either a native of Florence or lives there because, on page seven as they start out, the packing is helped by the family maids and “the *Signorina's* entire family.” Other than that, the *Signorina* remains a mysterious person in the manuscript, and in Pearson's life. Interestingly enough, the archives at Rowantrees Pottery contain a couple of items that provide some hints of who this person might be, but do not give us many details or provide much clarity.

Almost a decade later, in 1921, a few years after World War I has ended, a woman named Laura Bertolini sent a letter to Adelaide's father thanking him for his kindness and giving him details of a then current visit to Italy that Adelaide is in the midst of with a young companion, named Caroline Field, whose letter to Mr. Pearson is quoted earlier. Writing from Florence, Bertolini says: “Adelaide is here now and you can imagine how happy I am, so happy that I can hardly believe she has really reached Florence. I wish you could see her looking so well

and being so much admired by all our friends.”<sup>15</sup> The letter contains additional details that seem to give some credence to support the idea that this Laura Bertolini might have been the name of the *Signorina*. The letter also has some fascinating comments giving us insights into the social climate in Italy as it was evolving in 1921. (We will return to the letter and other documents later in Chapter 3, *Afterword*.)

Although, at the time of this trip in 1912 Adelaide Pearson was not a young woman (she was then 37), the manuscript exudes a wonderful combination of youthful enthusiasm (and her infectiously inquisitive nature) tempered by some forbearance and maturity of insight. And, as mentioned, it was not her first trip to Italy, having been there previously when she had developed strong relationships both with the country and with several individuals, including the above-mentioned Laura Bertolini.

Why did Adelaide write *Two in Tuscany*? Obviously we'll never know, but it appears to this reader that Adelaide wrote the *Two in Tuscany* account for publication. While we don't know the audience she had in mind, the account offers a pastoral view of rural Italy and clearly the author was enchanted by the countryside and the people. Taking a cue from the opening line of the manuscript that reads: “*Almost everyone seems to go to Italy these days...*”, the manuscript may well have been written as a travel book for American audiences, especially of the social and economic class that Pearson belonged to and who had the means and the desire to visit Italy. The tone and the places visited would appear to be consistent with this thesis. However this is simply conjecture.

Interestingly, even though *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey*, is a manuscript of 112 pages, it seems to be only the initial part of a journey in Tuscany in the summer of 1912. The two women begin the journey in Florence, and the opening chapter indicates that the trip ended there three months later. But the manuscript ends (somewhat abruptly) in Siena.

Pearson tells us (on page 35 of the manuscript) that the donkey, Nanni did pull the cart “*over seven hundred miles in three months...*” But left untold in Pearson's manuscript is the final leg of the journey (from Siena to Florence), and so, whether it was long or short, adventurous or boring, direct or circuitous, we don't know since the manuscript simply ends when they reach Siena.

Even if incomplete, the story is both charming and fascinating, filled with details of the pleasures and travails of travel in an age that long ago disappeared. Interestingly, as she indicated in the beginning, Adelaide desired to capture the pleasure of traveling at a leisurely pace - in a donkey cart - precisely because it was apparent to her that it was a mode of travel that was soon to disappear as the motor car had already burst upon the scene.

The typewritten manuscript is here reproduced in its entirety, complete with editing marks and accompanying photographs.

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15 Letter, Laura Bertolini, to Mr. Pearson, dated June 20, 1921. Sheila Varum collection.

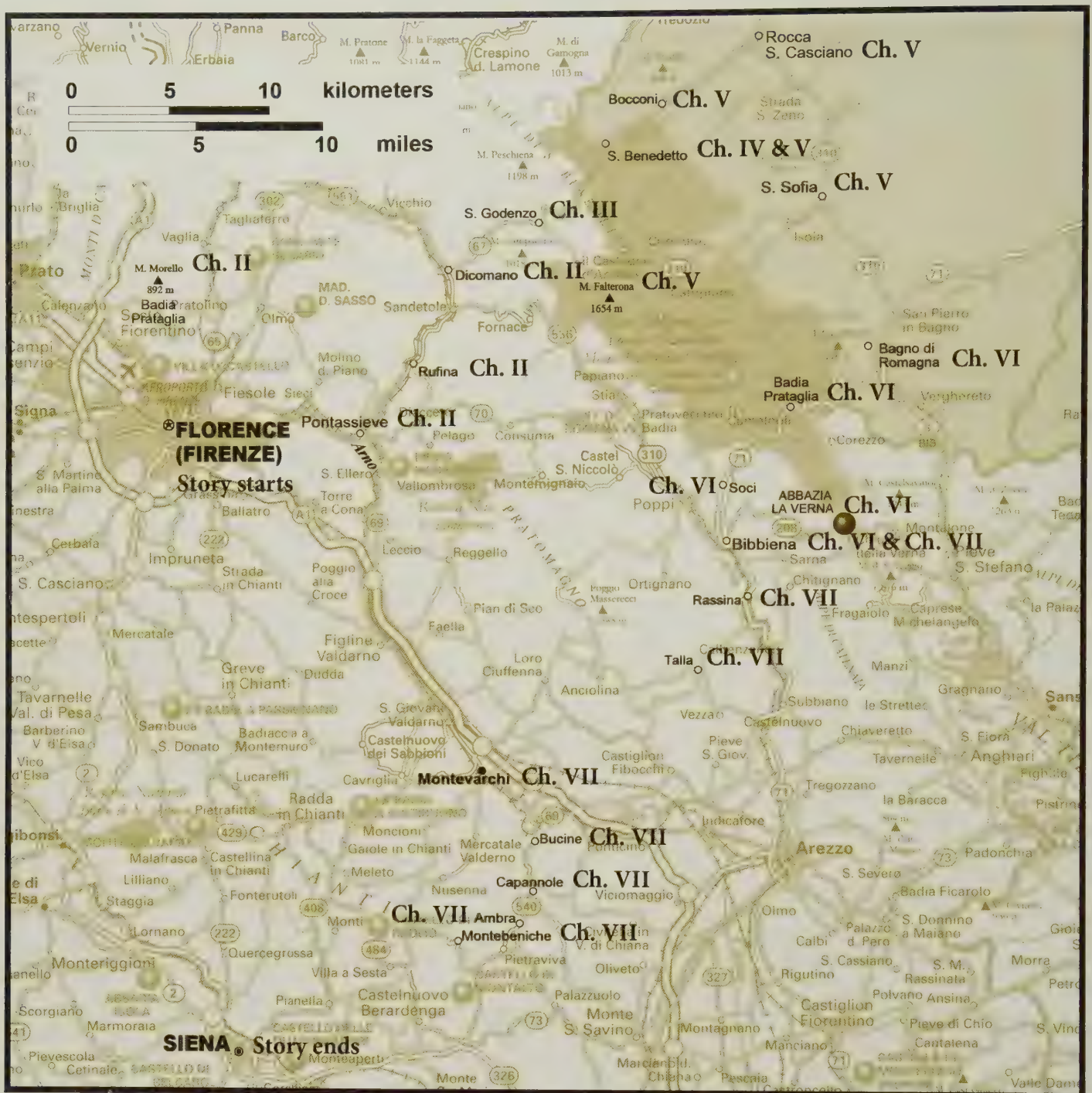


TWO IN TUSCANY WITH A DONKEY.

Adelaide Pearson.

This was the top cover of the manuscript, *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey*. The whole had been carefully wrapped in tissue paper.

FROM  
Adelaide Pearson  
Antrees  
Mill, Maine



A modern map of Tuscany with the cities (or places of interest) discussed by Adelaide Pearson highlighted and marked with the chapters in which they appear. The story of the journey begins in Florence and ends in Siena. It is not clear exactly which road (or roads) she took from city to city. While many current motorways will follow the general pattern of those she used, many will not. Indeed, the more modern the highway, the less likely it will correspond with the roads in use in 1912.





## The Start.

### A Synopsis of the Story

While the roads in Tuscany have certainly changed in the almost 100 years since this story was written, we have chosen to use a current road map (on the facing page) to chart their travels. And, probably inevitably, some of the places they visited are no longer identified on the current map. The brief descriptions below are meant to give the reader a brief hint of the organization of the manuscript and to correlate the chapters with the map. Those cities or towns that appear on our map are marked and included in the introductions below.

### Part I The Start

The story starts in Florence with Adelaide outlining the conversation that initiated the trip (previously mentioned) and describes the preparations for the journey. These involved the procuring of “Nanni”, the donkey, modifying a suitable carriage (including the addition of an automobile horn) and acquiring the necessary documents (some things have not changed) such as a permit to drive, the registration of the carriage and a pistol permit! She said that they also “expurgated” their wardrobe, and with that final gesture, feeling more or less fully prepared for the rigors of the trip, they set off. According to the manuscript, their departure date was June tenth.

### Part II First Adventures

They left Florence heading roughly east and north, (following the current route number 67) into the center of the province of Tuscany and its famous hills. As they begin their travels Adelaide notes that they have a chance encounter

with a friend and change their itinerary as the result of this conversation (page nine) with "*the genial padrone of one of San Domenico's historic villas.*" Following his suggestions they then plan their travel route to go over the Muraglione Pass into Romangna and back into Tuscany over the Mandrioli.

Their first night out was spent with friends of the Signorina and there is a detailed description of the villa at Compiobbi and the family there, along with photographs. A few pages further on in the manuscript (on page 12), Adelaide says that the two women "... *took farewell of family life for three months.*" That would indicate that they were gone for the entire summer of 1912, returning to Florence in September. After leaving Compiobbi, their first stop was in Pontassieve where after a pleasant overnight stay, they were off to Rufina. After some difficulties they found a room in a private house with a view of Mt. Morello. And then they went on to the towns of Rufina and Dicomano. They stayed with the family of the prior of Badia Agano near the latter town, Dicomano, which became the main subject of Chapter III.

### Part III A Tuscan Parsonage

This chapter is filled with the details of their stay at with the prior and his family at the Badia Agnano, situated a couple of miles off the main road near Dicomano. The extended family included the priore, his sister, an aunt, a niece and various animals (cat, dog, ducklings, a goat) all co-existing happily. Adelaide provides a detailed description of the functioning of the household, the preparing of food (of course, this is Italy). She also writes with some delight of the commotion made by Nanni who escaped his quarters and got into the garden. There was a visit to a neighboring abbey on a mountain housing a Della Robbia altarpiece (later in the book there will be many other Della Robbias). The meeting of various neighbors is described in some detail and Adelaide's powers of observation are quite acute. There is also a description of the raising of silkworms by the prior's family.

### Part IV Over the Muraglione Pass

After the first text page in this chapter there is a charming picture of the Signorina pulling on the halter of Nanni as they ascend the hill to San Godenzo. There are also photos of the landscape and villages (to accompany the text) as they proceed over the Muraglione Pass on the road to San Benedetto in Romagna. It is in this chapter that we are introduced to the "*trapeli*" or beasts of burden (draught animals) available to travelers at the base of each significant hill to assist them up the incline. *Trapeli* could come in various sizes, and breeds of horses, mules, donkeys, oxen all being used. Hooked to the heavily laden cart (in tandem with Nanni) the cart was hauled up the hill with the *trapelo* and accompanying young boy to guide the animals, and also to keep them working together since there could be friction between the beasts.

The chapter has many references to San Godenzo and San Benedetto as well as to Il Castagno d'Andrea, the birthplace of the painter, Andrea di Castagno.

The summit of the Muraglione.



## Part V In Romagna

The towns of San Benedetto, Baccone (Bocconi) and Portico are briefly mentioned but the chapter is filled with detailed references to Rocca San Casciano and Santa Sofia. It appears that they followed contemporary Route 67 to Rocca San Casciano before turning south on Route 310 to Santa Sofia.

Romagna, for those not aware, is another province and so is not really part of Tuscany. None the less, some of the most interesting impressions recorded in the manuscript occur in this chapter and the next while the women are in Romagna. The chapter begins, after a page of text, to a page of photographs and includes their impressions of the roadside trees stripped for the feeding of silkworms. They stayed in San Benedetto overnight (expressing a preference for sheep's milk in their coffee rather than the goat's milk previously served) and wake up to the festivities of a June Sabbath morning. (If they left on June 10, which was a Monday, the Sabbath in question was probably June 22 or June 29, 1912. Since the manuscript does not detail their trip on a daily basis, those dates seem a reasonable guess given their rate of travel and taking into account their previous stops.) Then they proceeded to Baccone (Bocconi) which they do not like, or recommend to others.

Thankfully for them, they only stayed in Baccone briefly before proceeding on to a village, Portico, (that does not exist on current maps) where the women obtain the single available room in the only inn there, and have to share it with silkworms practicing their occupation! (Apparently it is both smelly and noisy!) Since domestic details fascinate her, Adelaide comments on the household animals as well as on a three year old boy who consumes two beakers of red wine for lunch!

Proceeding on to Rocca San Casciano they visit the old castle (*rocca*) that gave the town its name. Here again, Adelaide's powers of observation are displayed and among the photographs in this chapter there is a charming one of Adelaide making prints next to the River Savio. In the town of San Sofia they find a substantial inn, which seems to offer the possibility of some amenities previously unavailable. So they inquire about the possibility of a bath and are met with an unexpected and amusing response. And, then again that night, (such escapades seem to happen with regularity), in another jailbreak from the stable, Nanni gets out and into mischief.

## Part VI In Casentino

Bagano di Romagna, Badia Prataglia, Scoci, Bibbiena and the Abbey at La Verna are the towns and sites visited in Chapter VI.

Much of Chapter VI is devoted to the area surrounding the La Verna mountain site/area. The Monastery at La Verna (founded by St. Francis) was the women's primary goal here but the whole area fascinated them and so the chapter includes extensive descriptions of the region and especially of the Mt. La Verna and surrounding points of interest. They spent time exploring the wonderful art found in the area including an altarpiece by Luca della Robbia (1400-

1482) in the Dominican sanctuary of Santa Maria del Sasso before going on to the monastery. There they explored the churches and more art done by various other members of the della Robbia family.<sup>16</sup>

In this chapter, on the occasion of their visit to the monastery at La Verna, (Abbazia La Verna on the map) Pearson makes a caustic comment about the fact that they had to take lodging in quarters specifically meant for women (the *Ospizio*) because they were not allowed to stay at the monastery. However, she then goes on to describe the place in some detail providing considerable details about the architecture of the monastery and its various buildings. She also recounts various stories about the legends surrounding St. Francis. And, she expounds on the food served at the *Foresteria*, where the visitors, monks and nuns all ate together. Other activities the women did while there included exploring the mountain where the various caverns of significance in the St. Francis legend are described. The chapter includes a number of photographs of the monastery and surrounding sights. The chapter ends as they are re-crossing the mountains on current Route 71 back into Tuscany.

## Part VII Across Italy to Siena

This chapter involves adventures in the towns of Bibbiena, Rassina, Talla, Montevatchi, Bucine, Cannole, Ambra and ends when they announce their arrival in Siena.

Toward the beginning of the chapter Pearson makes a series of wonderful observations about the antics of donkeys (including Nanni) when they become bored. After the disappointment of Santa Sofia, they are delighted that upon reaching Bibbiena, they discover that the town and the inn have all the amenities - electricity, running water and sewage and a telegraph that they can hope for. So, naturally Adelaide waxes poetic about them.

Rassina, the next town they stop to explore, is in contrast to most of their previous stops, not attractive, charming nor inviting place, but rather an industrial town containing a large number of silk factories in addition to a cement factory. Disappointed they do not tarry in Rassina. Following their overnight in Talla, they need the services of a *trapelo* and receive some interesting advice from the *trapelante*, the accompanying handler of the *trapelo*. In San Gustavo, not on the contemporary map, they share the inn with silkworms and Adelaide writes an interesting narrative on silk production processes.

In the next town of Montevarchi, the women again encounter some charming art from the School of della Robbia in the local cathedral before proceeding to a brief, but enjoyable stay in Bucine. Now on Route 540, they proceed southeast toward Capannole where Nanni gets in a race with another donkey cart, amusingly described by Adelaide! And finally, in the last few pages of the manuscript, the clay country around Siena is described (in less than glowing terms). As a fitting end to the story, upon entering Siena, the women and Nanni are initially mistaken as being part of a circus and attract a crowd. But all ends well when they see an old acquaintance, Adamo, and so, the manuscript concludes with these words: “*we were settled in Siena, the first resting place on our trip.*” Hopefully the reader is now oriented, and after this brief synopsis of the trip, is fully prepared to enjoy the pleasures that await in the pages of the manuscript that follows.

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<sup>16</sup> The della Robbia family produced a number of very fine artists in addition to Luca, including his nephew, Andrea, and his five sons. These artists are often collectively referred to as the School of della Robbia.





This page: Adelaide Pearson c.1922.

Bottom of previous page: Adelaide's photograph of the Tuscan Hills from the manuscript.

## The Manuscript

### Notes about the manuscript reproduction that follows.

Each page from the manuscript *Two in Tuscany with a Donkey* was carefully scanned and is reproduced here actual size. Nothing has been altered and so each page retains the marks of its history in the creases and folds that appear. The photographs were pasted down but on un-numbered pages and appear in the places between numbered pages where they were found in the manuscript. Appearing in the text are the editing marks from an unknown editor, perhaps Adelaide herself, but more likely someone else.

There is one change from the original however. Since the manuscript was typed on only one side of each page, a few chapters did not end on an even (left hand) page. So, in order to allow each chapter to begin on the right (odd numbered) page we have added blank pages. The title page opposite is shown with the shoelace still in place. That lace was removed for the scanning of the entire manuscript.



# Two in Tuscany with a Donkey.

A Tale of Artless Adventure



## Dedication



To Nanni

who had all the fun of  
this trip and none of  
the agony of writing or  
reading about it,  
we dedicate this book.





The HERO of this book.





## The Start.

### CHAPTER 1.

Almost everybody seems to go to Italy now-a-days, and at least one person in each group writes a book of "Italian Notes" (or "Days", or "Journeys", or "Cities"). They all seem to have most definite and logical plans--and ~~seem~~ to adhere to these with a faithfulness astounding to the casual wanderer from the "State of Maine"--i.e. ME. Sometimes they advocate entirely different routes from those followed by themselves. There is one book I have in mind which chronicles a ten days' automobile <sup>rush</sup> ~~shoot~~ along the Italian map, the writer of which advises all travellers to have an historical reason for their itinerary-- to "follow the footsteps of Dante, for example." As far as I can see this conscientious traveller would have to side-step over the whole of Italy; for <sup>even when</sup> ~~wherever~~ Dante didn't go <sup>to a place</sup> and sleep (and he slept in more beds than Queen Elizabeth) he wrote about <sup>it</sup> with such detail, that one might as well go there also. We never got away from the "somma poeta." Even this year when we journeyed humbly, far from the maddening haunts of tourists; from Mount Falterona "il diletto monte Ch'è principio e cagion di tanta gioia."\* (as it was indeed for us) to the wee crested brown birds which frequent the valley of the placid River Elsa, always the Signorina kept up an accompanying recitative from the works of her great native poet. ¶ So after all I hardly think a trip through Italy can be too logical. Italy is too varied, and vacation time is too short. From train windows and the tonneau of a flying automobile, <sup>while</sup> being hurried from city to city, I have looked longingly at tiny peak-perched cities--at placid peasant homes and all the homely country--

\*Dante: Inferno, c. 1.

side--have wanted to know them, to find out if it really was all so unlike our own land as it seemed, or if the eternal likeness of man made it different only in appearance. It was during a discussion of this around the hospitable, cosmopolitan lunch table of the Y.W.C.A. in Florence that some one said: "What one really ought to do is to get a cicchino and a carrozzina\* and jog over the country in little trips." We seized upon the idea at once; and through this same eminently respectable organization (the Y.W.C.A.) soon heard of an English girl (with a hyphenated name, too!) who wished to sell a donkey. <sup>H</sup> And so we met "Nanni," destined to become our motor for three months of almost continuous travel. <sup>H</sup> Our joys began at once for we had to interview many variously aromatic gentlemen before deciding upon an appropriate stable for our expected pet. Our choice finally fell upon that kept by a lame and very whiffy person who assured us that never, never should the signorine's donkey hear any unbecoming language in his stable-- mai una parola non buona!-- and we did dislike the idea of a donkey purchased from a pansy-eyed English girl (with a hyphenated name) learning naughty words after coming into our possession. For Nanni was no ordinary moke, but an aristocrat among donkeys; a tiny cream-colored beast with head always high, and intelligent ears always stiffly aquiver with interest in this interesting world. <sup>H</sup> Nanni (please don't call him "Nanny"! it's really pronounced "nahn-nee" with the accent on the first syllable, and is the Italian equivalent for "Jack"), the strength of whose character was only equaled by the strength in his firm little muscles; and whom we laughed at and loved and <sup>during</sup> whalloped ~~for~~ four months of close companionship; and from whom we finally parted almost with tears! Ah Nanni-- do you ever think of that trip, I wonder? Of how, a little at a time--so as to make the surprises last-- you unfolded to us the true inwardness of donkey character? Were you also

\* a donkey and a little carriage.



speculating as to Americans? You were wise enough, I'm sure!

In May his hyphenated mistress departed for the white cliffs of Albion, ~~and~~ her natal shore, and we came into possession of Nanni, of a smart tan-leather harness, and of a little two-wheeled tan carriage. I shall never forget our trial spin round the viali and up beyond the Piazzale to take tea with ~~the~~ Professor L.'s family. We drove into the yard and left Nanni tied while we had tea; and then undertook to back out of the yard. Right here we discovered donkey-trait number one—no donkey will back! There was no room in that yard to turn round; neither was there any intention on the part of Nanni to deviate from inherited deportment. A large determined woman is, I now learned, quite a match for a small donkey, however determined the latter may be. I seized that wretched little beast firmly, and proceeded, amid the cheers of a rapidly accumulating audience of automobilists, to haul him backward into the street, in spite of his digging all four of his naughty little toes into the slates with which, fortunately, the Professor's yard was paved. Nanni and I had had our first tussle and had both won— as usually happened afterwards. <sup>¶</sup> We rapidly became rather a well-known <sup>equipage</sup> ~~rig~~ in Florence. Such adventures as we had! I remember once when I had left Nanni in front of Roberts Pharmacy on the Via Tornabuoni<sup>u.o</sup>; a big, very shiny automobile, guarded by an almost ever-correct chauffeur, was standing just in front of him. The brilliant brass-work attracted Nanni's Sardinian eye (did I mention that he was a Sardinian donkey?) and little by little he drew nearer to the delightful apparition. I returned to the street just in time to see what seemed <sup>to be</sup> ~~like~~ at least a foot of pink tongue lovingly lap that burnished brass. And whether to enjoy more the frozen horror of the be-braided chauffeur or the sad reproachfulness of Nanni when that glorious radiator burned his

confiding caress, was hard to decide and at the same time maintain a decorous demeanor.

During the next month great were our preparations for the summer's "touring". First of all we joined the Touring Club Italiano, thereby securing innumerable advantages, from cheap gasoline to expert legal advice. We didn't happen to need either of these, but then we might have. We put the really lovely enameled silver emblem of the Touring Club (designed for flying machines and racing cars) on the leather flap which hung on Nanni's forehead. And into our rapidly accumulating document case we put our "recognition" cards from the Club, decorated with cheerful kodak views of our happy faces. Oh, the documents we had to collect! I had my American passport, my letter of credit, an Italian "recognition" paper (with photograph), a postal savings book, a permit to carry a pistol (with photograph), a permit to drive, and the registration of the carriage, as well as the Touring Club card. And the Signorina was almost as well provided.

Just a word as to our provisions for safety. As there were no banks in most of the tiny towns we frequented we each had a postal savings book from which we drew our money from day to day as it was needed. Every evening we telegraphed to the Signorina's lady Mother, as to just where and how we were, and what our plans were for the next day. The telegraph (and electric lights) we found everywhere by-the-way; even where plumbers have never been seen, nor heard of--nor the need of them felt.

Besides these documentary preparations, there were many other arrangements to be perfected before we could feel ready to break loose from all ties and go a-gipsying. First the carriage had to be altered. We had every bolt renewed, new and stronger springs put



on, the back of the seat made of a comfortable height<sup>h</sup>, a cielo (literally "heaven") or canopy added, like a carry-all top but much lighter, with curtains all round to protect us from sun or rain, or to be rolled up out of the way. A tall narrow trunk<sup>was</sup> made especially for us, in length the full width of the distance between the wheels, about a yard high and fifteen inches from front to back. This shape was necessary that the balance of the little two-wheeled carriage <sup>might</sup> ~~should~~ not be disturbed. A trunk of ordinary shape of like capacity ~~to this~~ would have lifted small Nanni off his feet. I made a large pocket of stout hand-woven canapa<sup>cloth made from</sup> a fibre between flax and jute much used for "linen" by Italian peasants) which strapped on the dash. This had a partition at one side to hold upright a bottle of drinking water. In the larger part we carried the camera, films, guide-books and maps, soap and towel, cold cream, tube of glue, a jack-knife and ball of twine, the pistol and our case of documents. This pocket was a comfort, for we never had the <sup>usual</sup> irritating little odds and ends ~~usually~~ knocking about the seat of <sup>the</sup> carriage ~~while on any trip.~~ <sup>H</sup> And lastly, the greatest improvement of all, an automobile horn was attached to the side of the seat— just to let the automobiles know we were coming. It really saved our lives many times during the summer, for Italian motorists drive madly over their beautifully graded and smooth, but very winding, roads. Before every turn we would blow furiously on our horn, and any automobiles— great touring cars, racers, trucks— around the curve, would slow down and draw off to one side to allow the advancing speeder to pass. For only when breaking records does the Italian motorist use his horn; and not always then. Out would pop tiny white Nanni, with ears erect and mincing gait, pulling his smart little tan carriage

and two mad mistresses. Mostly the halted motorist laughed consumedly and returned our honking salutes; but occasionally <sup>he</sup> ~~they~~ haughtily displayed a shocking lack of humor.

We did not get all this done without opposition from the conservative Italian workman— nor without threats of a law-suit. I believe nothing is ever accomplished in Italy without this latter accessory. Our error lay in the fatal fact that we asked a carriage-maker his price for doing our repairs, and then took the carriage to another man for the work. I fully expected to lodge in jail before we finally got away, but everything was patched up, owing to the Signorina being the daughter of her father— a genealogical **idiosyncrasy** which we often found most useful. The actual carriage-maker <sup>whom</sup> we finally employed was a wiley Tuscan who lived with his wife and seven children just beyond the Barriere della Cura. A more unreliable but beguiling person than the Sor Emilio it would be hard to find even in Tuscany. He never worked on the carriage except when we were there; so after the first week, one of us went out every morning and every afternoon to chaperone the work.

Thus by terrific struggles we finally got everything ready for departure on June tenth. We had studied the splendid road maps and "profiles" of the Touring Club until we felt as familiar with Tuscan roads as we did with those of Florence itself. Our wardrobes had been expurgated and perfected; and every contingency of travel which we could anticipate was provided for. So well had we planned that the only addition we later made to our Kit was a basket to carry vegetables. To some this may seem a curious travelling necessity. A real necessity it was, however, as we soon found. Throughout our three months of travel we never had any difficulty in getting



fresh, clean, wholesome food. The keynote of an Italian larder is always freshness. Even in great houses in a city like Florence there is practically nothing left to eat in the house by the time the family retires— no bread, no butter, not a scrap of meat or a bit of cake. And when we would arrive in a small town late in the afternoon there would be literally nothing edible left except the "stufata" ( a rich sort of stew), eggs, bread, cheese and maccheroni— all excellent things, but I happen to be one of the innumerable army of Americans "on a diet" and had to have fresh vegetables in abundance. So every morning when starting on a day's journey we would stop at the market held in the town square and select lettuce, romaine or other insalata from the basket of one old market woman, cucumbers or radishes from another, mushrooms, sweet peppers, zucchini, squash-blossoms from another, and fruit— peaches, figs, plums, cherries, or fichi d'india (fruit of the prickly pear)— from still others. For in the small towns, markets or vegetable shops were quite unknown. Arriving in the evening at a quaint old "rocca" we could be served a delicious dinner consisting of soup (always good, strong and fresh in Italy) omelet with fresh vegetables, salad, fruit and coffee, almost as soon as we were ready for it.

Our first packing of the carriage was memorable, for none of the straps were the right size and only by the combined and perspiring efforts of a harness-maker, a cobbler and a trunk-maker, two facchini (porters, who apparently sprang from the trunks of the Piazza Indipendenza trees) the stable-man, his assistant, the three maids of the house, and the Signorina's entire family, did we finally get off. ¶ Off through the narrow, flagged Florentine streets, soon accompanied by a swarm of small boys who began by jeering shrieks of

"Ecco l'areoplano!" (referring to our canopy, the like of which was never before seen in Italy) and remained by us as a faithful body-guard, bribed into friendliness by being allowed to toot "just once each"-- una volta per uno-- on our fascinating automobile horn.

¶ They were as hilarious as we when a turn into a narrow street, one side of which was dug up in true American fashion, brought us, in the middle of the block, face to face with a big four-horse truck. There was a pause and then-- great exhibition of firmness on the part of Nanni, who, like the star spangled banner, never retreated. We whopped, and we pulled; and the teamsters cracked long curly whips and even longer and curlier oaths; but true to the traditions of his ancestors Nanni would not back. Finally amid the shrill jeers of our body guard of monelli (gutter-snipes) and the sly comments of more mature on-lookers, the big amiable truck-horses were slowly backed and backed till a side street was reached, and ambling (but not amenable) Nanni, with his absurd air of detached interest in all about him, trotted by <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ his quest of adventure.





The Start.



The Villa at Compiobbi.





CHAPTER 11.  
First Adventures.

Out through the Barriera Aretina we trotted, and crossing the River Affrico— an imposing and historic stream, at this point almost a yard wide— felt that same reckless, now-we're-in-for-it spirit which exhilarated the late lamented Caesar when he plunged across the Rubicon. The afternoon sun lay warm and golden on the straight, dusty road. High walls shut off the view on either hand. The tram-line ran along beside us. It is said that Saint Francis met Saint Doménic on this road on his way to Rome. I can well believe it, for had both saints been here it would have been impossible for them to avoid meeting, so deserted, so straight, so shadow-less is the way. Adventure seemed far off— impossible; and all the dire predictions of our friends and acquaintances seemed even less tenable than ever. Where the shrine of the Madonnone (big Madonna) made a break in the cream colored walls we encountered, most unexpectedly, the genial Padrone of one of San Domenico's historic villas. He was one of the few who had encouraged us in our plans, so we hailed this unpremeditated encounter as a good omen. After an approving inspection of our outfit, "How are you going?" he asked.

"Pontassieve and then on over the Consuma Pass into Casentino."

"Oh don't go that way," he broke in. "Everyone goes over the Consuma while the Muraglione which I went over last week in the machine is far more interesting; and you'll get a glimpse of Romagna and can come back into Tuscany over the Mandrioli, another wild and little known pass. Oh, the roads are all right," in answer to a question, "They always are." He was busily scribbling on the back of an envelope.

"There! Just follow this general outline and you'll never regret it. He had jotted down a list of fascinating names— "Ruffina, Dicomano, San Godenzio, San Benedetto-in-Alpe, Portico, San Cassiano" and many more—<sup>of</sup> most of which we had never<sup>before</sup> heard, ~~of before~~. We caught fire from his enthusiasm and then and there made over our carefully thought-out itinerary— for were we not free agents? And again that exhilarated feeling of freedom came joyfully, restfully over us. We seized the proffered envelope with avidity and, feeling that adventure was always within our grasp, <sup>gave</sup> with a final toot on the horn<sup>while</sup> Nanni bore us laughing and grateful on our way. At openings in the wall we began to see stretches of the Arno on our right, and for the first time it struck us as a colorless stream; a wretched trickle of yellowish water winding its way through a great expanse of yellow gravel, glimpsed through the yellow dust-haze. After passing Rovezzano, however, the factories became fewer, the tram-line wandered off into the hills, and by the time Quintole was reached the walls which so enclosed and oppressed the road disappeared, the hills sprung up on the horizon; and when the weirs at Compiobbi widened out the river, the shifting lights of late afternoon turned it to an orange-gold or pale blue-green glory.

At Compiobbi we were to spend the first night of our "tour"; but as we were to be with friends of the Signorina's at their lovely thirteenth-century villa, we did not yet consider ourselves in the light of real adventurers. The house (for villa in Italian means park rather than the actual buildings there-on)<sup>was</sup> of stone, with the almost grim severity of its outlines softened by the delicate arches and slender pillars of the dainty double loggia. The great square tower was built for defence when turbulent fuorusciti of various factions stormed up and down this debatable ground which lies be-



tween Florence and the Appenines. Inside, the house has suffered ~~many~~ changes in accommodating itself to modern home life, although there are still, of course, many things of interest. Such is the great collection of shoes, some of which date back to the time of the Sommo Poeta himself. ~~For~~ These are the shoes worn by all the brides entering into the noble family to which the villa belongs. Small and large, dainty or clumsy, of leather or silk or satin, or even jeweller's masterpieces, they were a most human collection. The tiniest and daintiest of all were those worn by the gracious lady who still presides over the hospitable house, as each of her seven children pointed out to me with unaffectedly partisan triumph. These same little girls escorted us about the Villa, of which they might justly be proud. ¶ Three great avenues of stately cypresses there are, the height of the trees testifying to their great age. And many beautiful as well as quaint sculptural effects are found there, <sup>such as</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>^</sup> the colossal white marble Polyphemus which gleams out from a dark apse in the cypress wall; <sup>and</sup> <sup>^</sup> a dainty column with spiral carvings that suddenly springs into view through a break in the oak forest. As we threaded our way through the bosca (the shady grove without which no Italian villa is complete) a turn in the path disclosed a bandit crouching behind a tree, dagger in hand, about to spring upon the unwary wanderer! Our quite genuine starts of surprise and sharply indrawn breaths were greeted by shrieks of joy from the little countesses. The bold bad bandit was of terra cotta, life-sized ~~and~~ and life-colored, and had lurked in that same dark corner for over a century! ¶ The children's great-grandfather, like the true eighteenth century gentleman that he was, had filled his park with artificially romantic conceits, although he did his best to destroy the real romance



Polyphemus



Il Frate.

The villa at Compiobbi.



of his beautiful domain. There were ruined towers and castles; built ruined, <sup>you</sup> understand. There were quaint bridges under which no water has ever flowed. In a sunny glade rises a great black cross with a brown robed friar advancing toward it with pious mien— all of terracotta; but most realistic. Garden as we understand the term, there was practically none, but there was beauty to an almost superlative degree; so romantic a beauty that the Anglo-Saxon soul shrinks from such acute appeals to the emotions.

At the jolly big round table at dinner that night, we took farewell of family life for three months. That our health and happiness during that time must have been partly due to all the hearty brindisi— saluti and auguri— drunk in our honor that evening, we have ever since felt sure.

The next morning after leisure <sup>of</sup> coffee and rolls, after the children had given Nanni a last embrace, with our hosts' hearty farewells ringing in our ears-- "Addio! Addio, Buon Viaggio! Stiano bene!"-- a final salute from our horn, and Nanni covered us with glory by starting off at a brisk trot without any undue urging.

Our way still lay along the river but was far less dusty than that we had passed over yesterday. The road wound along (~~Italian~~ Tuscan roads always "wind"; such a phenomenon as a really straight road does not, I believe, exist), now between orchard walls, now along the hill-bordered river. To our left rose Jove's Mountain, blue and mist crowned, while off to the right beyond the yellow Arno and all ahead, tumbled the cobalt peaks <sup>about</sup> of Casentino. <sup>It</sup> was market day at Pontassieve when we arrived, and the Via Garibaldi along which we came was crowded to its utmost capacity with contadini come in to traffic. Bold, picturesque figures are these Tuscan peasants, with

their swarthy, <sup>o</sup>mustached<sup>o</sup>, acute faces, their great cloaks of green or vermillion cloth hung rakishly over one shoulder, their soft felt hats put on at most speaking angles-- soberly straight when seeking a trade, pushed far back from the black or, more often, iron-gray curls, <sup>which</sup> tumble riotously over the expressive brow when bargaining, cocked triumphantly to one side when negotiations are concluded.

¶ We picked our way through the throng, creating more or less comment by the way, until we reached the open place by the end of the "New Bridge", so called because in the middle fifteen hundreds it was built by the artist <sup>of Neptune in Florence,</sup> who designed the ~~Fountain~~, Bartolommeo Ammannato, to replace the old bridge, swept away in a spring freshet. Here by the Ponte Nuova, then, we asked an apprentice youth in a clean linen smock, which would be a good hotel for us to go to, and where it was situated. He most courteously gave us all the information we wanted and then insisted upon leading us to the place himself. And this we found <sup>was</sup> <sup>done</sup> always. A great deal of surprise we created wherever we went, it is true, for it is not usual in Italy to see a woman driving, also our whole turnout, from the canopy on the carriage to the breeching and hold-backs on the harness (comforts of which no Italian horse knows), was unusual. But that we were signore and therefore to be treated with respect was never in doubt. Would our famous American chivalry stand such a strain?

After seeing Nanni rubbed down and blanketed, and ordering lunch, we walked out to see the town. Little enough of interest there is however. We crossed the Ponte Nuova and at a street corner came upon a pretty but very dark girl deftly "putting clothes" (mettendo vestiti), as the Italian phrase has it, on the new wine flasks destined to hold the coming Chianti vintage. At one side of her was



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a mound of the great iridescent bubbles of the new fiaschi, before her a heap of creamy corn-husks, at her other side the growing pile of finished fiaschi. We watched her, fascinated, as her flying fingers deftly tied a strand of corn-husks around the neck, then placed a coil at the bottom of the bottle as a standard; a great curved needle was threaded <sup>in and out</sup> so rapidly that the eye could not follow the movements, and in a trice the whole body of the flask was covered smoothly, a long strand was knotted into the top and twisted between the hands into a handle— and another fiasco vestito was added to the pile. ¶ We wished to take her photograph; but upon the crowd of small boys (which we, of course, had in tow) suggesting that everyone would think that she was an araba, una negra, she waxed suddenly sensitive and no persuasions nor flatteries would procure permission for us to photograph the pretty scene. Much enraged I selected the largest boy of our unwelcome following and offered him a lira (20 ¢) if he would keep all of his kind away from us during the rest of our walk. This is a plan I have pursued before. It was no less successful today and we were no more annoyed by Pontassieve monelli. Over in the heart of the city on the Via Ghiberti we had a very human encounter. We were photographing an old medieval tower which was pointed out to us as the Torre di Filicaja, though it looked to me more like an old town gate, when our body guard, the ubiquitous Sandro, told us there was "an old one" (una Vecchia) who wished something of us. A hard-faced, but pathetically anxious old woman came forward and asked us to take her photograph to send to her son in Africa. While we were preparing to get the picture she told us the story of her struggles. For the better part of the past two years her elder son had been away on his military duty (the Ital-



Pontassieve,





ian conscription law is that all males between the ages of 20 and 40 must be ready to serve in an army of defense, and with a few exceptions, all must spend at least two years in the regular army) and that during that time her husband had died followed quickly by the younger boy. Then, of course, the soldier son had come <sup>back</sup> ~~home~~, as only sons are exempt from military duty. But hardly had he settled down at home and the affairs of their tiny shop begun to improve, than the Libyan War broke out. Caught in the tremendous wave of patriotic enthusiasm which swept over Italy then, the boy had enlisted and gone to the war. Although homesick enough the lad still displayed in his letters the utmost courage and enthusiasm. But he very much wanted a photograph of <sup>la</sup> ~~la~~ mammina, for which she, thrifty and anxious soul, felt she could not afford to pay. So, tremulously, she folded her work-worn hands over her clean blue apron and stood in the door of her little lampista shop. The picture came out rather well and we sent her a couple of post-card size copies, one of which found its way to Africa and was carried over her boy's heart for many months of parching heat, of hard and bitter work undertaken joyously for l'Italia and the advancement of the white, green and red banner. The other is doubtless framed and hung in the salottino for the edification of all callers.

After an excellent luncheon Nanni was reharnessed— not without difficulty, owing to the press of interested citizens about us— some information as to the road to Rufina was asked; and so much proffered, that had there been any possibility of wrong turnings we should inevitably have been lost in the hills ere night. Still retaining Sandro as guard and guide until the town limits were passed, we left Pontassieve and the Arno and headed straight towards the

mountains. To our surprise the road was perfectly level although on every side the hills rose higher and higher. Nanni, round with his hearty lunch, was indisposed to rapid movement, and indeed the sweet warm June afternoon made us, also, peaceful. So we jogged happily along with an occasional pull at the reins and shout of "Via! Nanni, Coraggio! Su! Vi-i-ia!" Suddenly, just as we were all three about asleep, a smart little dog-cart with a skittish, high-bred little horse between the shafts came out from a lane, shied at our canopy and set off down the road—fortunately in the right direction—at a most brisk pace. Now Nanni came of a famous breed of Sardinian donkeys bred for carriage use, a trotting donkey as they are called in contrast with the working donkeys; and the spirit of his ancestors always rose within him whenever another animal tried to get ahead of him. ¶ So without more ado off after the little horse flew Nanni, ears erect, tail stiff, every hair denoting his determination to overtake the impudent passerby. Fortunately for our steed's feelings the driver of the little horse (who small as it was, was still much larger than wee Nanni) seemed to have acquaintanceship with every peasant by the roadside, so couldn't really distance us. ¶ In less time than we could believe we were in Rùfina inquiring for a hotel—a hotel which appeared, to our consternation, to be non-existent. Now here was a situation! Late in the afternoon, a tired little donkey (although truth compels me to say that he seemed to take a most uncanny interest in the architecture and inhabitants of Rùfina), and no place to lay our heads, nor tuck up Nanni. After several fruitless inquiries the Signorina suddenly turned on the accumulating crowd and began to express her opinion of Rùfina and the Rùfinesi in no unmeasured terms—and we all know how voluble the Italian



can get when he is really moved. After some minutes of this tongue-lashing, which the crowd took silently and sheepishly like naughty children, some one suddenly remembered that "Meco" had a new house and would very likely be glad to rent us a room. The atmosphere changed: Everyone began to explain; and in the relaxed tension we all suddenly fell into fits of laughter.<sup>91</sup> When we could control ourselves, we wiped our streaming eyes, and accompanied by a giggling, joyful throng turned back to the new house of Meco, which turned out to be an inn in embryo. An advance guard had gone on to notify the sposa (good-wife) of our arrival, and right heartily were we welcomed. A beautiful, clean, hitherto untenanted stable received Nanni and the carozzina, and up clean airy stairs we went to a sweet-smelling chamber looking across fields and orchards, past Monte Giove to dear familiar Monte Morello itself. Monte Morello by which the Florentines predict the weather.

"Quando Monte Morello

Porta il cappello

Florentini

Portano l'ombrello."

(When a cap's on Monte Morello  
Florentines must carry an umbrella.)

runs the old proverb. We saw by the oracle that our family was enjoying the best of weather. So with happy hearts we tucked ourselves away between the scrupulously clean, hand-woven sheets, sleepy from our long day in the open air, and Oh so pleased with our successful first day's travel.

With our morning's coffee came a request from two of Meco's neighbors "to say two words to the signorine." Full of misgivings

we interviewed the embarrassed youths. For some time we talked at cross-purposes, but we finally gathered that naughty Nanni had broken out of his stall during the night and had more or less devastated our visitors' gardens. For which they wished to apologize humbly and to represent to us that it was through no fault of theirs that our donkey had eaten of their vegetables and possibly sickened himself, that the ragazzacci (bad boys) of the village must have abetted the bel cinchino, and we must really pardon the humble orchard-owners as they had no fault in the matter. After we had thoroughly understood this peculiar petition we graciously granted the desired pardon.

Before leaving Rufina we reasoned with Meco, with whom we were now firm friends, on his foolishness in not hanging out a sign to show that he was an albergatore (inn-keeper); and asked his advice as to inns further along our route. He proceeded to, very laboriously, write on a sheet of coarse, ruled paper

"I recommend these young ladies and their donkey to your especial care.

Giuseppe Berti."

"There," he said proudly, "Just give them that and tell them that Meco will come in about three weeks, and they will treat you as they should." And then he proceeded to give us a long list of inns along our next fortnight's route. A list which we used, by-the-way, and found always reliable. But never did we find anyone who recognized the name Giuseppe Berti; while when we would say "Don't you know Meco of Rufina?" sudden illumination would come. The Italian habit of using nick-names in preference to real names is very hard to Anglo-Saxon reticence. The first year I knew the Signorina



she gave me an exquisite tooled-leather, writing-pad with a very private pet-name stamped thereon in large gilt letters, to the embarrassment of all beholders. They even extend this brazen fashion into public life-- the most notable example being, of course, the unavoidable Dante whose real name was Durante d'Allegheri, the "Dante" being a baby diminutive of Durante. Much as if we should always allude to the Bard of Avon as "Willy".

Rùfina is famous for a most delicious white wine which we had often had in Florence and which we had had with our luncheon at Pontassieve; but in Rùfina they knew it not. Probably because they are poor folk and the Rùfina white wine is among the best of the chianti and correspondingly expensive.

The little River Sieve is crossed here by a quaint rustic bridge which looks quite unequal to the traffic it has to bear. Just beyond the town we passed by the foot of a long yew avenue leading up to the dignified Villa Poggio Reale, an excellent example of a <sup>seventeenth</sup> 17th century villa. The road was still flat though all the rest of the landscape became steadily more and more tumultuous. The skies also became tumultuous, Monte Morello hid his head, great thunder caps piled up, and just as we rolled into the very quaint and picturesque little city of Dicomano the storm burst in all its fury. Nanni is afraid of thunder; most fortunately, as it enabled us to get under cover quickly when a storm threatened. Thanks to friend Meco we knew here where we were going and were soon comfortably housed in the snug little hotel of the Fratelli Falugiani. While our luncheon was being prepared we scuttled across the wet piazza to the post-office where we received our first letters from home and telephoned to Florence of our whereabouts. "Don't fail," said the Signorina's Lady Mother, "to stop and call on the Priore of Badia Agnano. The Badia is near Dicomano, and I know<sub>47</sub> you will find the place unlike any you



The arcaded Piazza of Vicomano.



Nanni's smile of gratitude.



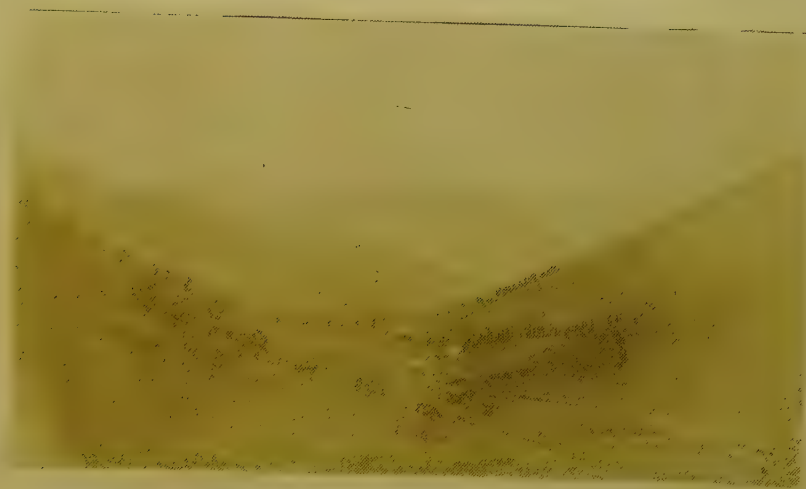
ever saw before." So after lunch, when the storm mercifully cleared, we found a country letter carrier who was going to Badia ~~agnano~~ and undertook to guide us thither. While Nanni was being rubbed down and harnessed we went out along the arcaded streets on a shopping tour. We bought a peck of oats to carry with us in case there should be a scarcity farther on, as is apt to occur in this between-season, before the new oats are in and when those of last year are about exhausted. They told us in the little shop that we were purchasing American oats. "America of the North" they explained, as in Italy "America" always means South America. Besides oats to put inside the tummy of our Nanni, we also purchased a lovely big blue and yellow plaid bandana to hitch about the outside of that troublesome portion of the little beast. For flies would light upon the delicate skin and then Nanni, whatever might be our plans for his conduct, would stop and first brush off the flies with one of his agile little toes and then proceed to nuzzle the bitten portion. This sequence of actions had rendered our progress from Rufina to Dicomano that morning far from harmonious. Hence the bandana. I can't truthfully say that it was becoming to Nanni nor that it gave any added "tone" to our outfit, but the poor little beastie was so relieved by the protection that as long as the fly season was on we never drove him without it. With the help of the postino the garment was adjusted. Grateful Nanni threw up his head, bared all his teeth and perpetrated the most appalling grimace.

"He laughs", said the experienced postino, "Observe how is grateful the little ass!"

His gratitude didn't compel him to go gracefully through mud, however, and all the way to the Badia, which lay a couple of miles off the main road, the friendly postino kept up a perpetual flow of encouraging conversation in our steed's furry ear.



The Badia.



View down the valley towards Licomano.



## Chapter III.

## A Tuscan Parsonage.

Up and up the winding lane which led from the strada maestra (main road) to Badia we wound through a double line of olive and mulberry trees, the postino alternately murmuring "Corraggio! Su! O asinello bello." (Courage! Get up! Oh, beautiful little ass) and questioning us about America. <sup>#</sup> A final up-hill pull, and at a turn in the lane the old cypress-shaded buildings of the Badia came into sight. The hand-wrought iron cancelli (gates) were locked. A vigorous pull on a handle to the right resulted in an embarrassingly riotous clanging of a bell. Soon a sweet-faced old woman with a gay kerchief over her head and a bright blue-and-red apron over her full black stuff skirt appeared. Such joy, such cordial greeting as was expressed in her face when the Signorina explained who we were! The gates were flung wide open. Various contadini were summoned to take charge of Nanni and our luggage, and we were borne triumphantly into the Prior's study. <sup>#</sup> There we were regaled with sundry little dry cakes (biscotti) fatti in casa (made in the house), including some really delicious brigidini which the gay little Priore said he always cooked himself. These brigidini are the little anise-seed wafers which are made and sold in quantities at every Tuscan fiera. The stiff dough of flour, egg, sugar and much anise-seed is mixed in great vats and brought to the fair grounds where over cheerful braziers the cakes are cooked between hot irons. I shall never forget how scandalized I was at a Florentine fair to find some of these sweets being

made in a mould originally designed for the wafers used for the Sacrament! Religious observances and secular life are so one in Italy that our northern sense of reverence for sacred things is often outraged. The popular brigidini were introduced into Italy, by the Scandanavian Saint Brigit when she founded the convent of ~~Santa~~ Brigida at Pistoia where the nuns used to make the little cakes as a speciality during the <sup>elevanth</sup> ~~11th~~ century.

With the biscotti we were obliged to take a glass of vermouth and also ~~of~~ two kinds of vin santo; all made by the Prior's sister, so there was no chance to refuse them, however one's State-of-Maine bringing up might be shocked. Why the two vin santi should have had the same name when the wines were so different we could not understand until the Signorina Nina, who made them, explained that the name referred to the process of manufacture. The difference in flavor and consistency was due to the grapes, one variety being from the vineyard in the valley, while those for the other were from the tiny terraces clinging high on the mountain side.

The sweet, spontaneous, delicate hospitality shown us in that little country parsonage we can never forget. Neither of us had ever been seen by any of the Prior's family. The only connection was that once in following up a case for one of the many Florentine charitable societies in which she interests herself, the Lady-Mother of the Signorina had had occasion to consult with the Prior. Yet had we been neighbors for generations we could not have been more heartily welcomed, nor more graciously made to feel truly at home. We had only expected to spend an hour at the Badia as the Signorina had explained the very slight





The hospitable Prior and his family



The old, old Badia church.

acquaintance she had with the padroni; but we reckoned without the lovely hospitality of our hosts -- a hospitality which was not developed suddenly because we were Signore but was extended freely and graciously to all comers.

"A priest's house is God's, and all are His children," said the Prior simply, when I commented on this with wonder.

After we could hold no more biscotti nor would risk, even for politeness, another sip of wine, we were told that the donkey was in the stable and the carriage all unloaded and that now we must make a long visit "almeno per l'estate" (at least for the summer!!!). Then we were offered all the rooms in the house and had great difficulty in inducing the family to keep their own rooms and let us share the big, airy guest chamber.

Everything was as spotless and sweet as <sup>it</sup> is only found in a house where the mistress does all her own work. The mistresses here were the dear old, kerchiefed mother and merry, capable sister of the Prior. The rest of the family consisted of a white cat who slept between meals near the warm embers in the kitchen fireplace (where the cooking was done!). A small shepherd dog who never minded any order he received, but had a certain sense of honor, as he never stole from the dining-table any bread he did not feel sure was to be eventually given to him (the family was almost awestruck by this virtue), and who dispensed fleas freely, yet seemed never to be without himself. There was a basketful of newly-hatched ducklings -- dear downy little yellow puff-balls who, already at the mature age of one day (or less), understood enough Italian to come running when the sweet old mother called "Nanni, nanni, nanni." They couldn't



get on very fast as their legs were unsteady and their feet big for their small muscles to manipulate, so they were continually falling over and sprawling about in the most laughable manner. There were numberless doves who flew freely in and out of the open windows, tipping things over and talking gossip. There was an enterprising black goat from whom we got the milk for our coffee. We also helped(?) Nina to make cheese the next morning from some of this milk. It wasn't bad tasting as milk, and as cheese it was simply delicious, so white and creamy that if it were not for its abominable smell ("odor" is too polite a term for the stench of goat's milk cheese), it would easily be one of the best of the milder table-cheeses. Then there was a little niece of the Prior -- a shy, gray-eyed child, so strictly kept in order by her relatives that her personality made no impression.

Altogether a jolly friendly household, living as our patriarchal fathers did. Nina told us that the only household necessities they bought were sugar, salt and pepper, and an occasional piece of cloth for a "best" dress or for the Prior's clothes which were made up by a travelling tailor; just as their shoes were made by a travelling shoe-maker who would be paid for his labor in leather tanned on the premises. Coffee was made, as it usually is in the country parts of Italy, of acorns, wheat and chiccory, roasted and freshly ground each day. A very good beverage it makes, too, tasting quite like coffee, but without the caffeine which makes real coffee harmful. Flax and canapa <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ grown for table and bed-linen and <sup>for</sup> ~~^~~ clothes; hackled, spun and woven by the peasant women on the Abbey estate. The finest of the material is worked on and finished by Nina herself

for her dote. Wheat for bread and cake and the hard wheat for maccheroni-flour grows wonderfully on this mountain-side, and is ground either in a primitive hand-mill, or at a water-driven mill in the valley. And so on down the long list of household needs. ¶ The food we had at the Badia was delicious. For supper the first night we had an omelet filled with cream cheese and branciolini (tiny bits of meat cooked with mushrooms in a rich sauce), bread of two varieties, three sorts of cheese, cherries, biscotti and coffee. The next day, besides helping knead down the curd for cheese, we had the opportunity of seeing Nina make tagliatelle, a sort of flat maccheroni always made the same day it is eaten. Housewives may be interested, as we were, in how this national dish was prepared. ¶ A hole was made in the top of a bowlful of flour of the hard wheat. Into this was broken one egg for every two persons who would partake of the dish; but this makes two or three times as much as Americans would eat. First Nina stirred the eggs gradually in with a spoon, then kneaded and pinched it in with her hands. When the paste was very hard she rolled it thinner than cardboard on a floured cloth, and set it aside for half an hour while the sauce was made. For this she chopped very fine, with the big, quaint, rolling chopper common in Italy, two cloves of garlic and quite a bunch of parsley. This was put with about a cup of olive oil in a shining copper sauce-pan over the fire. As soon as the garlic browned, a large, ripe tomato<sup>e</sup>s, cut up, were put in, one for each person, and salt and pepper added. When the tomatoes showed signs of being cooked, she turned again to the paste and rolled it tight~~ly~~; then cut the roll into thin slices, as we cut a jelly-



roll, only much thinner, of course. This made a great quantity of long thin strips of paste, which were thrown into a large pot of boiling salted water and boiled hard for ten minutes. After this the tagliatelle were thoroughly drained and put back into a saucepan, the sauce was rubbed through a sieve over them, and after cooking together some minutes more, the whole was served with grated cheese.

"She makes short bills and long tagliatelle," is said of a good housewife in this part of the country; as long bills would show that she was extravagant, and short tagliatelle that she was so slovenly<sup>\*</sup> and inefficient that even food like tagliatelle would appear rags and refuse.

The morning after our arrival at Badia we were awakened at the crack of dawn by the pigeons, -- to our intense disgust. It took us half an hour to get rid of them, as they mistook our flappings and "shoo"-ings for a new kind of game, having never before in their friendly lives been repulsed. A delicious rosy light flooded the valley, and all outdoors had that new-washed look of primal innocence which dawn gives even a sophisticated landscape. Here it was like looking upon the country of souls, with no hint of baser earth. But we were sleepy; and grunted and grumbled ourselves to sleep again in a short time.

4 About half past six there was a mad commotion outside. The Signorina still slept; but after vain efforts on my part to ignore the clatters and shouts ~~without~~, I got up, much irritated, and looked from the window. There was "something doing" in that peaceful landscape now! Nanni was careering about the orchard and vegetable garden, leaving destruction in his wake;



The hard wheat.  
Badia.



Getting drinking water.  
Badia.



followed by all the peasants with their families (and race-suicide is not prevalent among Italian peasants), Nina, and even the dear old mother of the family herself. It sometimes seemed to his harassed owners that the spirit of our pet was that of Beelzebub himself. In no other way could we account, among other traits, for his fiendish ingenuity in escaping from restraint. Every night so far on our trip he had gotten loose. In the few weeks we had owned him he had ruined three perfectly good halters. Everyone roared<sup>ed</sup> with good-natured laughter at his antics, but it ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> growing monotonously embarrassing for his owners. Once, on the ramparts of Lucca, when I was watching a runaway horse who had left the road and galloped into the rice-fields, an Italian youth standing nearby, proud of his mastery of English idiom, exclaimed, "Now he ranges." That is what Nanni was doing -- ranging. And quite incidentally he tore down vines and ate up most of the vegetable-garden. Finally, he and his followers, like a very small comet with a very long tail, disappeared from view. I heard, when I was able to make a public appearance, that he went into the stable by himself.

All the morning we pottered around after Nina while she went about her household tasks. Once we went down a long narrow path through the high golden stalks of the ripening hard wheat whose kernels would ultimately be made into maccheroni for the little community. Across a moist bit of ground where waved the long graceful leaves of the Florentine iris, the powdered roots of which were destined to perfume the snowy linen of Nina's corredo (trousseau). And there cold, clear water from a moun-



Only one day old.



The cat in the fireplace at Badia.



tain spring ran gurgling into a great stone tank from a moss-grown spout. On this spout we hung the picturesque, but very heavy, copper mezzini (sort of metal amphora) we had brought with us; and thus fetched water for the table.

The kitchen was a delightful room with its heavily beamed ceiling. On the wall the long plate rack where each plate could be stood on edge to dry; the large marble topped table where the maccheroni is rolled. And, best of all, under its tent-like hood, the great raised hearth where all the cooking is done; as is usual in Italian homes, even those of the wealthier classes. Cooking stoves as we know them are rarely seen throughout central and southern Italy; and even in Veneto the great focolari, are far more common than are iron stoves. The forno, similar in construction to the brick ovens of our colonial ancestors, was outside the house. In it was cooked not only the bread and cakes of the parsonage, but those of the entire community. Throughout Italy it is rare to find more than one oven in a village or even in quite large towns.

We were devoutly thankful that it was Friday and the food was simple magro (literally "thin," meaning without animal ingredients), for otherwise there would have been not a pigeon, hen or kid left alive on the estate, and what our condition of repletion would have been one shudders to contemplate, so hospitable were our hosts. As it was, after a simple luncheon of the tagliatelle and cherries we still had energy enough to walk to a neighboring Abbey with Nina as guide. We had been urged ever since our arrival to go there in order to see the Della Robbia altar-piece which our hosts depicted in enthusiastic terms.

The walk there was described as a pleasant stroll, "four steps only." For two hours and a half, through the heat of midday in a Tuscan June, we scrambled and slipped and climbed up and down precipitous paths, through dense forests of chestnut and oak, and along the rocky bed of a dried torrent. Twice we stopped at groups of peasant houses and had jolly visits with the inhabitants, sipping their home-made wine and telling our ages and how our mammas felt themselves of health. I was a natural curiosity to them, of course, being the first American they had ever seen. Most of them were much surprised that I could not recollect having met a certain "Dino" who had only last year gone to San Paolo, <sup>(in South America)</sup> But were relieved to perceive that Americans appeared to be human beings, like "we others" and not all indiani. They were all such sweet, friendly, hospitable folk; very different from the more sophisticated dwellers of the plains.

On a high, barren spur of the mountain we passed a very low primitive house. Near the path was a blind old man trying to cut grass for the goats. He would feel of each blade before cutting it to be sure it was erba sana (wholesome grass), so he progressed slowly. Nina told us the tragic story. The old blind man was the grandfather of the six or eight small children we saw about the house. His only son had married a foundling, a nice woman, and at first they got on beautifully and had this flock of little ones. Then the mother was taken ill and had to be operated on, which took all the money they had saved. Then the father sickened with tuberculosis, lingered long enough to consume everything left; and died. The old



grandfather bravely took up the care of the family of little children and sick mother, who had never really recovered from the operation. In a short time a wall fell on the poor man, injuring him internally while the plaster dust in his eyes rendered him perfectly blind. The owner of their place lets them have it rent-free, and with garden, goats and hens they just manage to live. The eldest child, eleven years old, works for a nearby farmer, thereby earning fifty cents a week, which is all the money they ever see. Still, by some miracle, they do get along; and the children were red-cheeked little youngsters too. It is the ever-present miracle of the kindness of the poor to the poor which clothes them, I fancy.

After a final desperate scramble we suddenly came out on the bald, rounded top of the mountain, where stand the quaint block buildings of the Abbey, built in this inaccessible spot when the years of the Christian era could be counted with three figures; and when inaccessibility meant safety. The view was glorious and the air keen and exhilarating. The Prior was not at home when we arrived and no one but he has the keys to the church. Also no one may enter the church nor see the Della Robbia who is not personally known to him. Of course Nina made herself responsible for our probity; otherwise we should have had our scramble in vain. ¶ The aunt and sister who keep house for the Prior also keep silk-worms, and the house was pervaded by the sickening odor of the cucoons. In a large, airy room, ordinarily the Salotto (parlor) was set up the tier of six or seven six-foot square cotton-covered frames upon which the silk worms were noisily eating mulberry leaves. Silk-worms really have shocking table



The old Abbey on the mountain-top.



and its treasure.



manners. Soon the Prior appeared and we went into the bare little church which is lighted up and made a holy place indeed by the truly heavenly Della Robbia over the tawdry little altar. This altar was decorated in the most awful gorgeousness for an approaching festa, but when I asked if I might photograph the terracotta, the nervous little Prior himself entirely dismantled it,-- then brought me two tables which I placed one on top of the other. Some steps were balanced against these that I might mount. Then, with all the assembled company gathered closely round that I should not fall, I placed the tripod on the top of the topmost table, and as climax to the imposing pile, my microscopic camera to crown the tripod. It must have been a moving spectacle. I'm thankful the negatives came out well after all that exertion. As the Prior had no photograph of his beloved altar-piece, we were glad to be able to send him a really good enlargement of the tiny negative. Of course, we had to rinfrescarci (refresh ourselves) both before and after these artistic labors. Such hospitable people as they are about here!

After a last farewell to the glorious Della Robbia, following still wilder and more winding trails (I suspect Nina of wishing to show off her rare American guest to as many neighbors as possible), we plunged down the mountain to Badia.

Here we found visitors, for our fame had gone abroad. Among others the medico-condotto (governmental doctor) came to see the strange females who shamelessly drove themselves about the country with a donkey. He had a dog of which he was immensely proud as it would show its tongue and give its pulse



Nanni's quarters at Badia.



Last glimpse of the family  
at Badia.



to be felt on request!

Such a struggle as we had the next morning to get away from the dear family at Badia. At no price were we to be allowed to leave. They insisted to such an extent that finally I was obliged to say, "Is there a contadino to harness that donkey or must I harness him myself?" Then things began to move. When we were nearly gone it transpired that the Prior and Nina were most anxious to go to the fair at Dicomano. So the Prior's fiery little pony was harnessed at the same time as Nanni, and he and Nina accompanied us to the foot of the hill where they turned along the strada maestra towards Dicomano and we went our way in the direction of San Godenzio, sad to part from these sweet new friends, but ever on the alert for adventure.





## Chapter IV.

## Over the Muraglione Pass.

Nanni's new plaid handkerchief made him much happier as the flies could no longer annoy him. A very full diet of crusca (shorts) instead of the oats he should have had, also tended to great peace of soul on his part -- a peace so great that by no mere woman-wielded whip, however lustily flourished, could it be disturbed. No, one could not truthfully say that Nanni flew to San Godenzo. We had plenty of time to view the increasing wildness of the mountains. To our left the green billows of the Mugello Mountains tossed and rolled, our continued change of view-point owing to the winding road seeming to give actual motion to their tumultuous ranks. Ahead rose the blue Appenines which we were to cross that afternoon. To our right in the valley of the Torrent San Godenzo lay the hamlet of Castagno, birthplace and home of that early renaissance painter Andrea di Castagno. Our combined ignorance concerning this important personage appeared to be that the Signorina recalled a lot of jolly **fresco** portraits of contemporary free-booters in S. Apollonia in Florence, while I remembered reading somewhere that said Andrea was "free of the guild of the barber-surgeons and grocers," and wondering what on earth that could mean. Could he get his hair cut, his teeth pulled and his groceries free? Or was he at liberty at will to desert the poorly paid profession of art to become either a comparatively prosperous barber-surgeon or a grocer? Beyond Castagno rose the blue height of Monte-Falterona, from the other side of which springs the mighty river Arno, and his twin brothers Arnaccio and Arnino, who soon join forces with



An old Roman bridge.  
Ponte alla Massa: San Bavello.



Up the long, long hill to San Godenzo.



the head of the family.

The road was a pretty steady climb to San Grodenzo.

The last half hour I walked as there was a stiff up grade and ~~was dead and light~~ 150 pounds less on his load ought to have encouraged small Nanni. Not that it did, though!

We were much annoyed during this time by a boy on a bicycle who circled round and round us. We thought he meant to be saucy and were correspondingly unresponsive to his advances. It afterwards transpired that he was the inn-keeper's son and wished to drum up trade for il babbo (daddy), but did not succeed in breaking through our icy reserve. Finally arriving in San Godenzo we presented "Meco's" recommendation to the proprietor of the "Alpina," and he was very attentive. Nanni was well looked after; we had a very nice room, where we freshened up before lunch and napped afterwards; and we had a really good luncheon. The whole family gathered about us and talked while we ate -- father, mother, three grown-up daughters, two small ones, a half-grown boy (he of the bicycle) and a man. They were most astonishingly cheerful and friendly, and the bill was really too absurd -- ten cents for our room and thirty cents for the lunch!

After our nap we went out to see the town and were not enraptured with its dirty streets nor with the inhabitants thereof. The old, old church (said to have been built in 1050), is interesting, though, with a raised choir like that of the Cathedral at Fiesole, and with a unique old stone pulpit, and two adorably ugly Holy Water basins. We heard there was a crypt -- alluded to by the priest's housekeeper as a "cellar all a great dark." We could find no one to take us about this really unusual build-



The Cathedral at San Godenzo.





ing as the priest was asleep and his housekeeper, a new-comer to the town, refused to awaken him or take up our cards. The fat, accommodating postmistress flattered us almost to the blushing point by asking us to send prints of any photographs we might take, so she could have postcards made from them.

We realized that Nanni, with all the good will in the world (and that morning, while he had displayed plenty of will, it had hardly been "good"), could not haul us up to the summit of the Muraglione Pass. So, following Italian custom, we had engaged a trapelo to assist. At the foot of every important rise on Italian main-travelled roads these supplementary draught animals may be found. They are of every variety of pulling beast -- horses, mules, donkeys, oxen, even cows, we employed before the summer was over. Only thus could we have crossed and recrossed the mountains, as we did, with any degree of decency. For Nanni was heavily loaded for such a wee beastie. Using trapeli as freely as we used them, Nanni arrived in Florence, after travelling over seven hundred miles in three months, so fattened by high living and care that he could hardly get between the shafts of his carriage and had developed a fixed idea that he could not go up even the gentlest rise without help. Thus does the luxurious foreigner instill habits of unseemly luxury into the simple Latin.

Today our trapelo, a huge red horse with a very gay striped blanket over him, was awaiting us on a picturesque bridge half a mile or so beyond San Godenzo. Here a rope was passed behind our dasher and ~~there~~ knotted about the ends of the shafts (which in these two-wheeled carozzine extend to the back of the carriage), then the ends were brought forward from the two sides



Here we took our first Trapelo

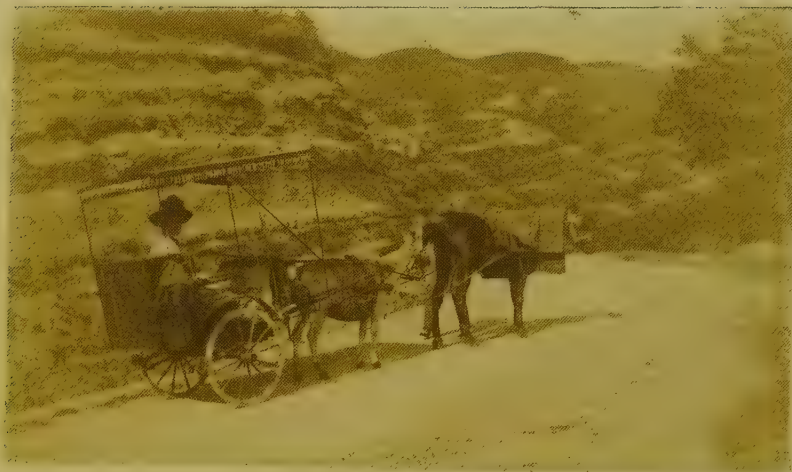


Looking down on San Godenzo.



and tied to the tugs which came from the breastplate of the horse as in ordinary service. With much cracking of the whip by the trapellante (driver) we were off. <sup>¶</sup> But not so fast, please. We were more or less "off," let us say. It was Nanni's first experience of having a hired man do his work for him, and like many humans in similar circumstances he did not submit as gracefully to his hireling's ministrations as would one to the <sup>manner</sup> ~~manner~~ born. In fact, he kept his Missis rather busy for a half hour or so. First he felt moved <sup>to</sup> (to either) bite his faithful helper or <sup>to</sup> pull hairs out of the conveniently dangling tail. Then, at intervals, he would pull back as hard as ever he could, till we feared that either the harness or his little white legs would surely break. At last the long-suffering horse managed to land one good kick on his impudent nose, and we, following the expert advice of the trapelante, ~~and~~ began whopping the naughty one with the handle of the whip. Encouraged by these gentle methods, our Nanni at last resigned himself to a life of leisure, and for the rest of the ascent, while taking a most engaging interest in the landscape and all road-side happenings, gave us no more trouble.

The views all the way up were wonderfully wild and beautiful. Although we left practically all cultivation behind us shortly after leaving San Godenzo, the richest sort of wild vegetation extended almost to the top of the pass. The ravine at our right got deeper and deeper, the heights above, wilder and more precipitous as we neared the summit. The red-roofed white houses of San Godenzo sunk and sunk, till the town appeared to be nestling in a green valley, and we could hardly believe our memories of that apparently everlasting climb up to it that morning.



Our first Trapelo.



The summit of the Muraglione.



The summit of the Pass, in a saddle in the saw-like ridge of the Appenines, was wild indeed. The great curved piece of wall which protects just the highest point of the road and from which the Pass takes its name, Muraglione (Great Wall), is most unexpected. Before it was built it was no uncommon occurrence for heavily loaded vans to be blown into the valley below, so terrible is the force of the winds which howl through this gap in the wall of the Appenines.

We arrived at the summit about two hours after leaving San Godenzo, bade good-bye to our trapelo and started on the long descent to San Benedetto. The road was magnificently built and graded and, of course, perfectly kept up. When shall we spend-thrift Americans learn the economy of keeping our roads in repair, instead of expensively, and uncomfortably, getting them in order at irregular intervals?

We now left Tuscany behind us and began our short detour in the Province of Romagna. The whole aspect of the country was different. Much wilder, rugged, ~~wilder~~, and without vegetation on the mountains but with a very rich cultivation of the plains.

At first Nanni, looking like a (moderately) large mechanical rabbit, hopped gaily along behind a country cart. The brake held the carriage, and all he had to do was to get out of the way. So we thought that we should soon get to San Benedetto. But, alas for our hopes! ominous sounds soon made themselves heard from the back of the carriage. To our dismay we found upon investigation that we had lost a bolt under the trunk, and until it was replaced should have to go very quietly.

There was not a house, nor a building of any kind, nor ~~any~~ signs of humanity anywhere in sight as we began to go cautiously down that interminable zig-zag of a road. Beautifully graded and perfectly kept it was, yes, but certainly it was not a road especially adapted to arriving anywhere in particular. In about an hour it began to get dusky. Several waggles down below we saw a man stop and look up at us, and then sit down on a stone to wait. At each turn we saw him more distinctly. He was a very black man; and he was obviously waiting for us. We would gladly have excused him! Finally we came up to him, I covertly clutching our pistol. He greeted us politely and walked beside us twenty minutes or so, conversing amiably. He was black because he was a charcoal burner; had waited for us to come up with him as the trade of the carbonaio is a lonely one and our roadside acquaintance was of gregarious instincts. A more credulous, pious soul I have seldom encountered. He told us about a little shrine we passed. That on that spot, two men and a truck were precipitated into the ravine by a landslide. As they fell, they called on the Madonna to save them, and not only the men but the horses and load also, were landed in the floor of the valley in perfect safety. So they erected this little shrine in grateful recognition of favors received, and here, once a year, the parish priest celebrates Mass.

"And plenty of these carters who believe in nothing else, and only use God and Gesù for swearing, know of and believe this happening, and always say an "Ave" before the shrine, and drop some soldi in the box," said our black sheep, concluding his tale. He accompanied us down to the valley and there, with





San Benedetto in Alpe.



The Italian popolo finds us interesting.

polite salutations and courteous auguri that we might have a buon viaggio, he disappeared into a mysterious gully. A most gentle scarecrow!

Then we began the last stretch of the road. And truly we feared for some time that it really was stretching. At every turn we expected to see San Benedetto, and never a sign of that haven (or of any other) did we ever see. We were like Columbus hunting for America. We knew that we should eventually arrive, but Nanni was one of the doubting crew and wanted to go back. At last, about eight o'clock, we discovered land birds (i.e. hens) off our bows, and at the next turn we came upon the wretched little hamlet of San Benedetto. Far up above, on a ragged spur of the mountain, perched, the old Abbey from which the town takes its name. It was not an inspiring place, now that we had arrived; but any port is good in a storm.

We had been warned that San Benedetto was no place for us to stop at, but were agreeably surprised at the inn. I say "the" inn advisedly, for there was but one, a most primitive place but apparently clean. The floors were paved with great flags, exactly like those of the Florentine streets. Our room was most wonderfully decorated; a foot-wide strip of blue -- a good solid blue -- at top and bottom of the walls and around windows and doors, the rest of the wall space being filled with bright lemon-yellow panels surrounded by generous strips of orange, bright green and purple. The bed was enormous; very high, very hard; with boards instead of springs, and a two-foot-thick mattress of well compacted corn husks (with an occasional cob). Still, the bedding was clean and sweet-smelling, and as we had our own pillows with us, we slept long and peacefully on that unpromising couch.



## Chapter V.

## In Romagna.

Our long day in the keen mountain air conduced to sleep; and between the coarse, hand-woven sheets of our unsympathetic bed, we slept most soundly till the Sunday stir in the village awakened us. We flung open our shutters to a world all newly made over, glad and good and glorified in the clear light of that June Sabbath morning. The whole country-side was sweet and fresh, filled with yellow sunshine. From far up above us the mellow tones of the bells of the old Abbey of San Benedetto-in-Alpe called through the valleys, and whispered to the mountain tops, their age-old invitation. The ill-paved streets of the little hamlet were filled with a gay holiday throng. One of our windows looked down on the irregular triangle of the piazza (town-square) where the animated open-air market usual on an Italian Sunday morning in the country, was noisily in progress. Hens cackled, goats and sheep tinkled their bells and uttered plaintive bleats, donkeys called greetings to friends and acquaintances, to all of which Nanni from his open stalla responded in a fine high soprano. Like the well-bred little beast that he is, Nanni never makes a sound when in harness, so this morning's discovery of his vocal attainments was a surprise indeed. Somewhere nearby the clang and ring of iron on an anvil told us that the village smith was actually replacing our lost bolt (such things never are found ready-made except in the cities). Everyone was in gala attire and already the older women had started up the steep unshaded road to the church, their figures shapeless and bent from cruel toil coupled with rheumatism, but their heads covered with bright kerchiefs,

from below which dangled long gold ear-rings, pearl embroidered. Their hands were twisted and almost useless, but their tongues --

We had sheeps' milk in our coffee on this morning and liked it better than the goats' milk we have been having. The odor of the latter is so unpleasant that the American, unused to such a highly scented beverage, is rather sickened by it; which is unfortunate as all here unite in claiming great nutritive and health-giving properties to this latte di capra. Still, San Benedetto is not a place in which we should advise anyone to plan an extended sojourn. We were there thirteen hours (which perhaps accounts for our prejudice), and left with no regrets;-- but with Nanni in the best of health and highest of spirits, owing to good oats, running water (no donkey will voluntarily drink water from a pipe) and cheerful converse with his kind. The country, though, was heavenly lovely; the road winding through a deep ravine with the shallow Mentone roaring along at our right, the little whirl-pools and back-waters the color of aquamarines, the foam thrown up in irridescent heaps like the great seed-pearl jewels of a rich contadina. Such a well populated road in spite of the lack of visible habitations. Groups of women and girls, other groups of young men, walking and chattering lustily. Peasants from remote farms bringing produce in to the Sunday morning market. One man was driving a donkey with a kid in each saddle bag,-- live little black kids who squalled most humanly. We were rather relieved that he was going the other way and we should not have to eat those kidlets served as lamb chops! While all passers gave us long, honest, open-mouthed stares, they also gave us courteous greetings; and made merry, keen comments on our rig. Then





Gathering mulberry leaves for the silkworms.



Silkworms feeding.

there were many quaint and beautiful bridges hung across the shining river,-- some distinguishable by the high pitch of the arches very very old -- quite probably antedating the Christian era.

All along the roadsides there were trees utterly denuded of foliage. In the still green tops of others we saw men and boys busily at work filling large sacks with the leaves. We had passed scores of these before sudden illumination came to me. There was not a deadly and contagious vegetable disease ravishing the countryside which the poor farmers were desperately fighting by cutting and burning all affected twigs, although this was the explanation, my complicated Anglo-Saxon mind first made to account for the phenomenon. The universal raising of silk-worms throughout the country demanded quantities of fresh mulberry leaves every day to feed the voracious insects, and the denuded trees were mulberries.

Round a sudden turn the whole road was paved with yellow locust blossoms. Another turn and two houses came into view with a bed-quilt or gay-colored table-cloth flapping from each window, and people gathered on the front steps. <sup>Before</sup> ~~In front of~~ each house, in the middle of the road among the locust blooms, was a cross of thickly-set daisy blossoms. Farther along, in front of other houses we found all the emblems of the Passion done in the same way. It was really lovely, though we nearly broke our necks and injured Nanni's disposition driving in the ditch to avoid destroying the decorations. All the single, winding street ~~of Beccane~~ was gay with fluttering table-cloths and bed-spreads, of red or yellow, green or purple, and the sound of chanting told





Carrying Kids to market.



The procession at Boccone.

us that the procession was near. <sup>H</sup> First came women in black, with white scarfs over their heads, lighted candles and rosaries in their hands; then the little girls in white. Following the bambine came the sacristans and acolytes; and under a canopy the priest, bearing the Host. Behind came the boys and men. The women braced up at the sight of us, huddled into the ditch, and the little girls sang louder than ever. The priest almost stopped in his amazement, while his canopy rocked ominously. The first boy who caught sight of us hesitated a moment, and hesitating, was lost. He hastily put his hat on his head, blew out his candle, pocketed his rosary and, followed by every man and boy in the company, began to examine Nanni and the trap with the most excited interest; while the procession wound on and across the bridge towards the confines of the townlet, quite man<sup>l</sup>less and boyless. We hastily folded up the camera, led Nanni out of the crowd and fled away as fast as ever we could, much chagrinned to have spoiled that pretty, pretty ceremony by our alien presence.

"Boccone," the name of the village where this discomfiture occurred, means "a big mouthful," but even a comparatively small dragon could have swallowed this boccone like a home<sup>o</sup>opathic pill, so small it was.

Every turn in the road brought new beauties of cultivated valley and rugged unclad mountains. We were circling all about Monte Falterone, the highest peak in this part of the Apennines, and, in the simple phraseology of my native land, we felt that we were "getting our money's worth" of scenery. Also we were filled with a glorious content. Who could be otherwise? The road was perfect, the air warm but bracing, the sunlight soft



and golden. Nanni was pretending he was a spirited charger, and skipped along happily; and altogether life was very sweet to us that June Sunday. Oh, the care-free joy<sup>of</sup> being on the open road, all one's belongings attached, youth and health ours, and a glorious landscape to wander in at will! There is an intoxication in it always. But especially so in Italy where everything is so superlative that the senses almost reel -- the soft climate, the good roads, the friendly people. The most dramatically beautiful of countrysides, filled with romance, with ruined memories of far-off days when peace was unknown and joy a fiercer passion than now we can experience. The light adown the valleys in this golden June was to the eye what heather-honey is to the palate. The shooting, whirling, dancing rapids of the glacier-blue river hymned right lustily of the joy of living.

Before we knew it we were in Portico and putting Nanni into the very clean and orderly stable of the little hotel kept by the conjughi Calabri. This stable was on the lower floor of the hotel as we always found to be the case in the country; but unlike the usual run of such places was kept like a room for cris-tiani, the walls and ceiling neatly whitewashed, the paved floor clean and all the arnese hung in orderly rows. Upstairs the big heavily-beamed, tile-floored kitchen was equally attractive, with its great camino (hooded hearth) and two long tresseled tables, the wood of which was dark with age but polished brightly. These were the dining-tables for the popolo. The signori were provided for in the adjoining room with a half dozen of smaller tables with table-cloths on them and small islands of ingrain carpeting under them.

There was only one bed-room we could have, we were told, and in that there were silk worms(!) but as we only wanted the room for a few hours perhaps we would not object. We did object very much, but could not help matters, so went up to the room, at least a third of which was filled with bundles of dried ginesta stood up on end. For these silkworms were just on the point of going in bosca (literally "in the woods"). That is to say, they had had their last meal and had been placed on the sheaves of broom to form cocoons. But they seemed to be paying the very slightest of attention to their bushes. Many were of an enterprising nature and now that their appetites were no longer titivated by beds and beds of delicious fresh mulberry leaves they began to take an active interest in the world at large and to do what seemed to us quite an unnecessary amount of roaming about, and a great many kept falling off their bushes and crawling across the floor. It was really quite disconcerting. After all the excitements of the morning we felt the need of rest and slumber. So we closed the eyes of our imaginations and as much as possible disconnected from our conscious realization our sense of smell and really had a good sound nap before luncheon. # The sad-faced hostess was also the cook; and there was a clean, efficient little boy of about eleven who attended to all our wants and seemed to be his mother's right hand man. Later we discovered that his still young father was a helpless cripple from rheumatism contracted during his military service; and that the mother, a Florentine of the impiegato (clerk) class, was disastrously overtaxing her strength trying to run the hotel without help and at the same time care for her helpless husband. The boy was a dear.



Let us hope that his father's fate does not await him.

In the dining-room, while lunching, we were much entertained by two tame doves who begged and stole shamelessly from all the guests. We were regarded at first as very uncivilized because we objected to their walking about all over our table, but eventually their friendly disregard of our repulses and our rapidly rising frenzy thereat struck the rest of the guests as intensely humorous and we became quite part of the family in the general roar of laughter which followed an impudent victory of the birds. In a box in the corner of the room were three tiny kittens so imbued with distrust of all that the world could offer that whenever we even looked at them they spit and snarled in a most uninfantile manner. There is something so depressing and unnatural about unfriendly babies. There was a fat little black puppy called Mimi, who looked like a sportive astrachan muff, dispensed fleas freely, was periodically cowed by the kittens, and seemed to be the only altogether care-free and truly contented being in Portico. He belonged to the solemn three-year-old son of the medico-condotto, who lives at the hotel with his wife and two youngsters and father-in-law. The baby-boy drank two beakers of the red wine of the country with his luncheon(!) and presented us each with a bunch of flowers in a very sweet manner. He seemed healthy and happy. I don't doubt that he went to bed every night at eleven and never took a nap, as that seems to be the usual course with the Italian middle-class child. They do not grow up "nervous," either.

In spite of the silkworms we left Portico with real regret and after another superb drive of about an hour arrived at Rocca San Cassiano.



Typical modern bridge  
across the Mentone.



Rocca San Cassiano.



We easily understood why our advisor for this part of our trip told us that this was one of the most beautiful drives in Italy. At Rocca we had our usual excitement with small boys when arriving. They annoy the Signorina but I can usually make them useful. Here we had to find the hotel and they guided us there; but not before I had caught and spanked one of them. He became our devoted adherent for the rest of our stay. The hotel here was very good. It was the last to which we had a recommendation from friend "Meco" so we felt that it was a sort of jumping-off place. After settling into our room and ordering dinner to be served on the flower-decked terrace, we started out to "do" the town under the guidance of our chastised friend. We went to a beautiful vesper service in a rather distasteful rococco church; we telephoned to our family in Florence; and we climbed<sup>b</sup> up the smelliest lane I ever got caught in, to the picturesque old rocca, or castle, from which the town takes its name. The lane was unspeakably dirty but seemed an untouched example of a mediaeval street, as it wound up the hill from the river to the castle. There was an irregular but closely set paving of large blocks of stone, slightly sunken along the middle for drainage; high walls on either side. The whole too narrow for carts to pass each other, having been built before the days of wheeled vehicles. What scenes of colorful, carefree pageantry, what days and nights of blood and fighting this old road has seen. Now the grass grows between its stones and gay little flowering weeds spring up, mature and fade away as have the generations of men who have tramped up and down its now deserted masonry. There is a new, wide road now leading to the Rocca which we followed coming homeward. Flat and white, it lay

in the afternoon sunshine with little of romance, 'tis true, but as eloquent of peace and good will toward men as was the old road of the greed and lust of power of the days when might made right. The Rocca is now the home of a peasant proprietor who has planted many vines on his tenute (holdings) which is unusual in this non-wine-producing part of the country. There were also the inevitable silkworms which we had to inspect -- and smell!

It rained during the night but these perfectly drained roads are never really muddy and by the time we had said our farewells the country was at its very best. We started three times on the wrong roads, for by now we had run off all our maps.

Each time some one came running after us and set us straight. Everyone in the township seemed to know who we were and where we were going; and displayed a laudable determination that we should arrive there. It suddenly clouded up and began to rain, as will happen in the mountains. We remembered the legend about Nanni's ears, and trembled. Then a fat man came running after us and told us there <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ six kilometers (about three miles) of up-hill; and would we like a trapelo? We allowed as how we did. So he tied a most dilapidated old rack-o'-bones in front of Nanni and we started off for the fourth time. In about twenty minutes it began to rain in torrents. Nanni wasn't pleased, but he could not stop because the trapelo would have pulled him right along; so again we could not find out if it is really true that when a donkey's ears get wet he won't walk. We let down our curtains and did not get a drop ourselves. The trapelo man crawled in under the back curtain (walking all the time, of course,) and



from that vantage point vocally remonstrated with and directed the horse, who was a steady-going old nag really needing no attention. Shortly before the summit was reached the rain ceased, the sun came out and the scene was brilliantly beautiful. Every leaf shining with diamond drops -- the tossing peaks of the blue Appenines all about us appearing, disappearing, reappearing again from amongst the angry storm-clouds. A glorious rainbow arched the west, with the beginnings of a second and a third among the folds of the valleys. Then came a long coast down to a town forever nameless to us as we had no maps. But forever shall we think unkindly of that anonymous place. For we met many inhabitants, of each of whom we inquired if there were any long rise in the road from there to Galeata; and all said, "No, no. Two minutes only." Yet when we had crossed a bridge and lost sight of the town, the road began to go up and up; but winding, so we could never be sure that the next turn would not bring us to a descent. I walked a while; then the Signorina walked. The road got steeper and steeper. Then we both walked and walked for several miles before we got to the summit and began to slide down the long hill on the opposite side. The minute we reached the place where we could both get into the carriage and stay there, the heavens opened and the rains came. Only the righteous are thus looked after by Providence!

At the bottom of the hill the rain stopped again and Nanni, much disgusted with life crawled dejectedly along the last level stretch of road, into the quaint, picturesque, arcaded little old city of Galeata.

The contrasts between the province of Tuscany and that

of the adjoining province of Romagna must be seen to be appreciated. Of course we had always read about the almost racial differences between the various parts of Italy; but I think we had not really believed it! In Romagna all the people seemed to us so red -- red faced, red haired, red handed; the women wearing red kerchiefs on their heads, while the men are all girdled by red sashes. In Tuscany the people are lean and keen and not brilliantly colored.

We had such an amusing hostess at the Hotel del Giglio (House of the Lily!) at Galeata; fat, uncombed, uncorseted, polite and pretty clean. She got us up a <sup>delicious</sup> ~~galumptions~~ lunch at short notice, and poured an intermittent stream of such inspiring dialect out the window <sup>upon</sup> ~~into~~ the heads of the stablemen that Nanni fared sumptuously, had a bath and good rub-down, a big feed of oats, a long drink of oat-meal water, besides having the carriage and harness cleaned and oiled. Every time this eloquent lady passed an open window she dropped moving remarks of a personal nature coupled with vigorous suggestions as to future activity on the part of the squirming stable retainers. When there were no windows handy she directed her conversation towards a lumpish young handmaiden, and obtained wonders of accomplishment there, too. She, the ostessa, never seemed to do anything but talk; and yet the hotel was spotless and we were very well looked after. The bed in our room was about six feet high and eight feet square. E - normous, it was, with a jolly, handwoven, yellow bed-quilt which we felt sure made a gallant showing from the front windows on festival days. Bocccone taught us that.

After tea we reluctantly left the known comforts of the Lily to tempt the unknown. Nanni was as frisky as a kitten and



scampered along out of town a very different little donkey from the sullen creature who crept sluggishly in before lunch. Soon after leaving Galeata we went through a bit of populated road, one could not dignify it by the name of "town," which called itself Pianetto. We tried to pick our way through the street filled with children and old women. But they all insisted upon our stopping and seeing the Chapel of the Madonna in their church. One old woman in her patriotic enthusiasm actually seized Nanni by the bridle and led him up to the church door. So we left her in charge of our belongings and went into the dark, rather colorless building. The stone-work was interesting throughout the church; the famous "Chapel" was an uninspired stone erection on the left of the nave, rather richly carved and in practically perfect preservation. We soothed the pride of the inhabitants (all of whom with the reluctant exception of our old gardian, escorted us into the church), by photographing their treasure. Then we jogged on to Santa Sofia. As we approached the town and began to distinguish the buildings -- square-built, plastered affairs, of course, tinted cream, yellow, pale blue or green or brick colored, with tiled roofs, bright green shutters, and with many false windows painted on blank walls --

we picked out as our destination the hotel which looked nearest the road, and cleanest. It was largely labeled "La Pace" (peace), so we decided to go there. Owing to the meanderings of the main street it proved to be the most distant house we could have hit upon. Nanni saw two large signs which said "Rallentare," and slowed up to such an extent that only with difficulty could one be persuaded that he was moving at all. He is such a law-abiding little beast. <sup>H</sup> The "Abode of Peace" when we finally arrived ~~that~~ there proved to be an excellent hotel with electric lights and an altogether up-to-date

look. The furniture in our room was not only good but even elegant. But here, too, as at Portico, there was a tragedy. The silent sombre figure which we saw restlessly pacing the corridors was that of the owner of the hotel. For weeks she would say nothing, know nobody. Then the veil would lift for a few days, or hours, and woe to the luckless servant who had presumed on the mistress's condition to scamp his work. So, not knowing when the unseeing eyes might be opened, all worked their best.

The little maid in black dress and snowy cuffs was so smart that after an excellent dinner served on the terrace, we inquired if it would be possible to have baths, if hot water were plentiful. In Italian small towns -- or even large ones -- this would be a necessary question, for the general mode of procedure to procure a bath would be for the maid to make several trips with copper mezzini to the neighboring fountain to bring in the water. Then on the hearth under the hood of the camino would be lighted a little fire of charcoal. Over this the water <sup>would be</sup> ~~was~~ placed in a great pot; and then the long-suffering maid must stand beside it and literally "fan the flames" till the water is heated. Therefore the considerate traveler in Italy hesitates and makes a few inquiries before ordering a tubful of hot water. Here, however, there seemed to be no trouble. Could we have tub baths? "Oh, yes, Sicuro!" Did both the signorine want baths?" Yes, they both did. And about nine o'clock the capable little maid brought the hot water in which to bathe two signorine -- in a white china teapot, on a tray.

After breakfast the next day the maid brought word that the padrone wished to speak to us about Nanni. We feared our beastie



was sick and were much alarmed. But no, it was nothing alarming.

It seems that in the stable with Nanni there slept that night a band of gypsies, on piles of straw on the floor. They had come to tell fortunes and do tumbling acts at the fair which was to be held the next day. According to his pretty wont, Master Nanni got loose in the night and danced upon the prostrate forms of the unfortunate mountebanks. They could not catch him in the dark and tried to escape by leaving the stable. Nanni was smarter than they were, however, and was almost the first through the door. In deadly terror of being suspected of stealing him, the whole company -- men, women and children -- began to follow that wicked sprite, whose white little figure, shining in the star-light, led them a most dolorous chase about the town. When the geographical possibilities of the villaggio were exhausted he took to the suburbs, and jumped over a wall into an orchard, where the gypsies dared not follow him for fear of being shot as trespassers. So they ran around the outside of the garden wall till they reached the owner's house. After with much difficulty arousing the family, the poor hunters explained matters and asked permission to enter the garden and catch the marauding animal. But in Italy, as elsewhere, egiziani are regarded with suspicion; and the farmer kept them waiting in the cold till he was dressed to accompany them on the chase. By the time that was accomplished, enterprising Nanni had done about all the harm possible on that estate. As soon as he heard the approaching voices of his pursuers, with tail and ears erect he was off over the wall seeking new worlds to conquer. So on, through the long cold night season he kept those wretched outcasts rushing about, leaving a wake of blasphemy and ragged gardens in his trail, till, just as the red June sun rose over the purple



At Santa Sofia



Pianetta.



mountain tops, he was finally cornered and captured on the porch of the Town Hall. Then, weary, footsore and frightened, the gypsies brought our naughty free-booter back to the hotel just as the padrone was taking down the shutters of the "Abode of Peace."

Convinced that Nanni had been aided in his manoeuvres by a demon, they hastily gathered together their goods and chattels and departed, making "horns" with their fingers to protect them from the evil eye. No one seems to have entered any particular protest against this outrageous demeanor of our donkey. The only reason I was told the story was to explain how he had managed to lose two shoes during the night, and so would have to be reshod before we could go on. So, while the little rascal attracted the attention of the community at the blacksmith's shop, we wandered about Santa Sofia. A rather dull place, we thought, though in a sufficiently picturesque situation.

In the big loggia of the Municipio (town hall) were gathered numbers of old women with great round baskets of cocoons for sale. It is interesting to note the different shades of color of the various qualities of silk. The best are a shining golden corn-color like good butter; and by all sorts of gradations they arrive at a sort of grey-tan which I gathered, was the poorest of all.

We left Santa Sofia with a trapelo as it was a long up-hill pull through beech forests to the summit where a new inn had just been built. Among other good things we had for luncheon was omelet with some of the famous ham of the country chopped into it. This ham is always eaten raw and is in consequence rather a

a dangerous dainty. One hates to miss any of the local dishes (we were much disappointed that the celebrated truffles of Santa Sofia were not in season), so I hit upon this method of tasting the ham. The Signorina, of course, took hers plain, like the good Italian that she is. There are certain cast-iron table conventions in Italy which entertain the foreigner. No Italian will cut up maccheroni or spaghetti, nor drink wine till that course is over, for example. There was a wandering chicken in the dining-room at "Carnaio" (this new inn), and I began throwing it crumbs, and ham -- rind and various odds and ends. The Signorina bet I couldn't feed it till it would refuse anything more. I held to the opinion that, with perseverance, I could. The Signorina nearly won, but a handful of cheese I cut up for my guest produced satiety, and with a choked gurgle or two it staggered off; and, I am sure, must have burst. Then a large black dog came in, lapped up the cheese, gave me three fleas and was called off by the proprietor, who was coming to tell me that the donkey would not eat. We went into the stable and found Nanni simply ignoring his food and drink. I picked up a handful of oats and offered it to him. He grabbed it as if he had never seen food before. Presented with his box of grain he just looked sadly at a far corner of the stable. And I had to feed that sulky little beast a whole kilo of oats handful by handful. It seems that in the excitement that morning he did not get fed before leaving Santa Sofia, and his feelings were so outraged at this neglect that it took a great deal of persuasion to get him to eat again. It was funny -- but irritating.

"But what will you, Signorina," said the philosophic



stableman, "donkeys are always donkeys."

It was so heavenly lovely way up here on this mountain top that we could not bear to shut ourselves within walls, so we took rugs and cushions up on a fern-clad slope, under the blossoming chestnut trees and napped and wrote letters till tea time. We even boiled our kettle and made our tea up there. A sweeter picnic ground was never seen. Then a gentle decline all the way to Bagno a Romagno with Nanni amiable again after his late sulks; and for ourselves -- we sang with Pippa -- "God's in His Heaven -- All's well with the world."

From our room at the Hotel del Savio (named for the river) we could see the great wall of the Appenines which we had to scale on the morrow. Presumptuous enough such a thought seemed this evening when the mysterious violet lights of sunset drove the mountain peaks straight up to the sky. The white town seemed so tiny, so easily lost in the majestic roll of the hills that were it not for the soothing purring of the little river fear would have seized upon us both. In the thickening twilight the mountains seemed marching upon us and our thoughts turned involuntarily to tragic tales of landslides -- of villages wiped out in a moment by the falling hillsides; of streams as seeming gentle as the Savio rising and inundating all a countryside, leaving, when its waters fell, no trace of living thing.

In fact I'm afraid we had been rather "fed up" on mountains lately and were in a fair way to have real attacks of the horrors when in hustled the brisk little maid, lit several lights and urged us to keep them lit all we wanted to as the hotel paid the electric lighting company by the month so economy was no ob-



Making Kodak prints: Bagno di Romagna.  
By the River Savio.



ject. Brought thus suddenly face to face with the well-illuminated facts of life, we realized that common sense is a most excellent thing in woman and prepared to spend the evening developing photographs. Then as we had luck with the developing, we spent the morning in printing and finishing some four dozen prints which we did on the sands by the Savio in order to have that running water so indispensable to these chemical orgies. ~~Then~~ We were so entranced at this primitive method, that we drew lots for the post of model and the unfortunate Signorina had to take off shoes and stockings and wade across the river, assisted by three giggling washerwomen, and to photograph me with the basins, etc.

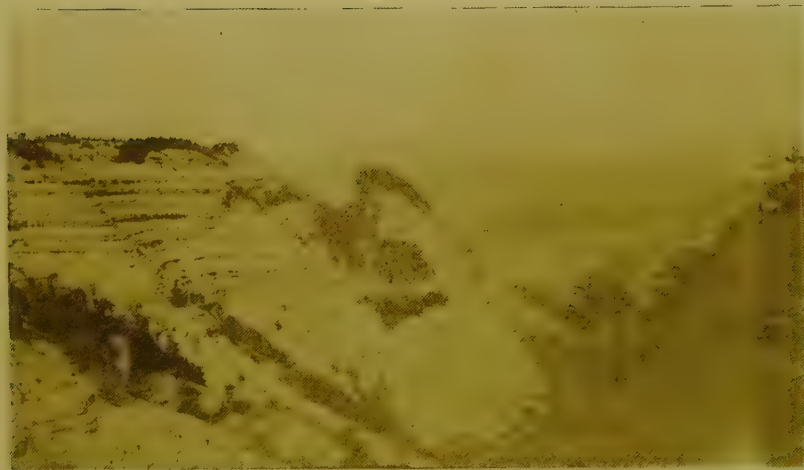
When we came back to lunch we heard the usual "Tale of the Midnight Adventures of Nanni." It transpired that sometime during the night he loosed himself, entirely destroying his beautiful red halter in the struggle. Then, thirsting for companionship in his criminal career, he loosed a large black donkey who shared the stable. They apparently ranged about a while doing all the mischief they could; then Nanni, with the ingenuity of the devil who, I am sure, lurks within his smoke-colored hide, somehow opened the stable-door and the fun began. They devastated two or three gardens and serenaded all the sick and irritable people in town. About six-thirty they went down to the Piazza and raced round and round, and did track-team stunts. And all the inhabitants of Bagno turned out to behold this diverting corso dei chiuchi (donkey race) until the proprietor of the Savio arrived breathlessly and gathered in his black donkey and the aristocratic Nanni. Then he sat down and made a halter of woven

rope which he declared would keep our roving companion within bounds. We thankfully (but sceptically) paid a lira for this accoutrement. And after that Master Nanni staid put. LAUS DOMINE!





The Mandrioli Pass as seen from the seat of the  
carriage with a general foreground of Nanni  
& trapelo.



The "puff-paste" mountains of Romagna.





Chapter VI.  
IN CASENTINO.

We left Bagno shortly after luncheon much disappointed not to have seen the famous baths from which the place takes its name. But the stabilimento does not open until July and most wholesale housecleaning was going on. We had for trapelo Nanni's companion in crime, the padrone's black donkey, who in spite of unusual matutinal exertions did most of the work for the fourteen kilometers of up-grade from Bagno to the top of the Mandrioli Pass. As the two donkeys had had such a gay time together in the morning the owner of the black donkey thought best to harness it beside instead of in front of Nanni. We thought this hitch even better than the other, as Nanni seemed much less inclined to sit on the hold-back and let his obstinate feet dangle. We never were able to get any other trapelante to adopt similar methods; their theory being that "what should signorine know of the art of trapelare?" We had two microscopic small boys as trapelanti this trip -- one led the black donkey and the other strode by Nanni's bridle. When, as occasionally happened, intercourse between the animals became acrimonious, these gallant youths would hale the nipping contestants apart. Each child armed himself with sprigs of the blossoming broom which he used with all the officious vigor of the genus small-boy in my own lively land. When one contemplates the astonishing variations of the mature article, it is amazing how much the young of the human species is alike the world over!

At one point we met a herd of immense white cattle

with horns a yard or more wide. They are terrifying creatures to meet on these unpopulated roads. Even when I am in the carriage and protected by the whole of Nanni between me and danger, I am -- well, "nervous" -- I don't want to get out and walk through the herd. Now, one of our trapelanti, nine years old and about two and a half feet high, dashed forward with a squeek and a flourish of broom-blossom, and drove the whole lumbering herd down over the edge of the road into the field below.

Some four miles from Bagno we passed the substantial stone house of the cantoniere and stopped to refresh ourselves with coffee and selzer water, a most grateful beverage which is obtainable almost everywhere. The little boys, to my horror, took each a brimming glass of red wine. The Signorina wouldn't let me interfere, as she said it was quite the usual thing among the peasants for children to be given wine. Still, drunkenness, as we see it in America, is practically unknown. It is very upsetting to my New England traditions. The cantonieri are the men who patrol the roads and keep them in the wonderfully perfect condition which we found everywhere. These men usually have a house provided for them; and while they are paid very little, that little is steady. They (or their families) are allowed to sell wine and other refreshments to travellers, and some, like this one on the Mandrioli Pass, have an appalto -- i.e., a permit to sell the government monopolies of tobacco, salt, sugar and quinine. In harvest time, which is of necessity a dry season when the roads do not deteriorate much, they are allowed to hire themselves out by the day on the neighbor-



ing farms, orchards and vineyards, thus forming a reserve of reliable laborers much needed in the country during those few busy weeks.

At the top of the pass our small trapelanti, mounted one behind the other on the black donkey, left us with most polite salutes and prettily expressed thanks for their mancie (tips); but as soon as they were out of sight round the curve we heard heartening sounds of boyish whoops as they proceeded to race their steed towards home. After photographing Nanni beside the stone which here marks the boundary between the two provinces as well as the top of the pass -- just to prove we had been there, as encouraging friends had predicted that even with a trapelo we should never be able to climb so high -- we began the zig-zag road down the mountain. We soon caught sight of the old church and the stone houses of Badia di Prataglia nestling among the chestnut trees below us, but we were two hours reaching the town, so carefully graded is the road. Again we noted the sudden change in the landscapes of Romagna and Tuscany, for we had come again into the home province.

We left bare, verdureless mountains (looking like Titanic puff-paste) and richly cultivated lowlands. We entered into a well-wooded but little cultivated country. Here the comparatively new work of the re-forestration of the cruelly denuded Italian mountains is being carried on vigorously, presumably encouraged by the proximity of Camaldoli, where the monks have for centuries by careful tree planting rendered the lumber cutting on their domain a perpetual source of income. Undoubtedly the Tuscan side of the Apennines is the prettier, greener, gentler; but the Ro-



The summit of the Mandrioli Pass.



The Piazza of Bibbiena with the Mount of La Verna  
in the distance.



magna is romantic, wild and rude -- redolent less of Saint Francis and more of robber barons.

Badia di Prataglia is a lovely place half way down the mountain, its bare stone buildings almost entirely hidden by the trees; where one has always in one's ears the sound of rushing mountain torrents. We put up at a Florentine pension which had moved up here for the summer and it seemed strange, after our late adventures, to be eating such plain food so conventionally served!

There was a pretty German girl and her well-filled-out Mamma as the only other guests; for it was very early in the season. The girl was very sweet and friendly and practised her English on us till she discovered our true nationalities. Then, to avoid corrupting her accent by my American crudities, she exercised an Italian which was almost too feeble to have been trotted out in public. She surreptitiously got the Signorina -- who, like most Italians of her class, is a linguist of the facile sort which causes faltering Saxons to despair -- to translate into German an Italian love-letter she had just received from a young army officer. Apparently the stolid Mamma was unaware of this affair with the sprig of Italian aristocracy, and daughter wished to keep the youth from turning up at Badia Prataglia.

Oh, but it was cold at Prataglia! We belted Nanni up in his gay yellow and red blanket; and put rain-coats, skirts, shawls and lap-robcs over our beds; and still nearly froze. The water we had to wash in was freshly drawn from an icy mountain brook which brawled under our windows; and while it was doubtless bracing it was certainly far from comfortable.

Before leaving we climbed up the quaint winding path to the ancient church of the Badia -- a dark, almost forbidding little building, so old no one is at all sure when it was first built. Certainly it was in existence in the year 1000, and was suppressed for a time about three hundred years later. Stern and bare and unresponsive as the times which gave it birth, it clings to the rocky mountainside with a defiant sturdiness which mocks at time and change. A terrifying, unfriendly little church which we were glad to leave there in its closely crowding oaks and chestnuts, and get off on to the open, human road again.

Such clear, bracing, intoxicating air as one breathes in Casentino -- the sunlit valleys, the mountains covered with fragrant verdure, the little rivers all a-tumble with life, and everywhere beauty, and evermore beauty, --here a delicious hillside radiant with yellow broom; there a cypress-veiled old stone tower:-- the sound of rushing waters always in one's ears; the scent of myriads of flowers in the air: -- the whole vivified, intensified by memories of the turbulent histories of every hamlet and bridge and valley-trail!

The two hour descent from Prataglia was exhilarating. Nanni ambled willingly along the zig-zag road under blossoming chestnuts and twisted oaks. We met bands of peasants returning from the high mountain meadows with incredibly huge bundles of hay on their shoulders. Every now and then along the roadside would be stout rails or low terraces cut into the mountainside where the poor, over-loaded women and girls could for a few moments rest their over-taxed muscles by depositing their loads



on these shelves, thus avoiding the extra fatigue of lifting the weight from the ground to their heads again after the repose.

About two-thirds of the way down, the road to Serravalle branched off to the right. And perched high on a precipitous, tree-clad rock, its white walled houses topped by the grim old tower of the castle, we saw the quaint town itself looking for all the world like one of the miniature cities in an old illuminated missal.

Rising out of the billowing tree-tops in the valley to our left was a great shaft of stone as if splintered from the opposite mountain, which here showed a bare gash in its side. On top of this lonely rock amidst thickly clustering oaks we got glimpses of the ruined stronghold of Marciano. Soon, high on the left, the Castle of Partina of those renowned old freebooters, the Counts of Romena, came into sight, rising ~~rose~~ from the black cypress and ilex trees, about it, like one of the ultra-romantic pictures of Böcklin. And so on, down to Soci, on the plain, -- every turn in the road disclosing fresh beauties -- and just consider how that road did turn and twist and writhe its way down the mountain side!

Soci was a busy little place filled with factories. For, after a history as turbulent as the rushing, roaring little River Archiano which dashes through its midst, the town has modernly settled down and harnessed the ebullient energies of both river and inhabitants to the twentieth century ends of manufacture. Fired by such examples of accomplishment, small Nanni, like the River Archiano, suddenly developed great power;

and, for the first time in his history, he galloped madly like a racing rabbit all through the town, amidst the cheers of the inhabitants who were just then flocking out of the factories for the noon hour.

Shortly after Soci the road began to ascend and Nanni, much discouraged at the lack of a trapelo at this trying juncture, crawled slowly to the piled-up little city of Bibbiena. Always before we have stopped at inns either on a little square or on the outskirts of the town; but here at the Hotel Amorosi, there was between our room and those of the house across the way only a street so narrow that one could almost reach over to those all too-corresponding windows before us. But we were ~~all~~ well looked after here,-- Nanni, as usual, on the lowest story, which as the hotel is built on a very steep hill, was a long way down from us;-- not far enough to keep us from hearing at intervals ~~all through the night~~, his high soprano joining the less melodious and aristocratic chorus of his fellow lodgers which rose and fell all through the moonlit night.

It was market-day when we reached Bibbiena and the town was of course overflowing with peasants. The steep, steep, roughly paved streets were filled with a chattering, bartering throng which drove hard bargains, or drifted in and out of the churches with equal ardor. They seemed even more talkative than the usual market-day crowd in Italy. Perhaps the modern Bibbiena wight lives up to the genial reputation of his town -- for this is the birthplace of Bernardo Dovizi who was chosen to define the qualities of mirth that the ideal courtier must have, at that famous court of Elizabeth of Umbria.



Another famous citizen, Berni, (from whom all burlesque Italian verse is called poesia bernesca) lived here. Altogether it has a jovial record. All attempts to "sight see" in Bibbiena end in one's being led to <sup>the</sup> Dovizi Palace, home of that Cardinal Bibbiena whose shrewd, fat face Raphael so often painted. The palazzo is typical of the best of renaissance domestic architecture with beautiful pointed windows and a really fine entrance. The Dovizi arms -- the Medician balls quartered with riotously overflowing horns of plenty -- are found everywhere in the town; even on the glorious Della Robbias in the church of San Lorenzo.

But from the crowded market-place we caught a glimpse of the lode-stone which had drawn us to Bibbiena -- the blue peak of La Verna, goal of our thoughts and desires for many years. There St. Francis, rightly called "the most Italian of the saints, the most saintly of the Italians," loved to retire and gather strength and renewed vigor in the clear thin air on the heights; and there he had his supreme experience, receiving upon his body the marks of his Saviour's Passion and death.

The mountain is of the same height as Vesuvius but, owing to its more spread-out form does not look so high. The steep cliff, to the right, as we looked at it (the southwest side of the mountain) is about 650 feet sheer -- a precipice which it was hard to believe we should be able to scale on the morrow.

Still, with hope and faith, we started out; a stout, white horse was our trapelo, a horse that spent his whole time in this trade as even carriages with real horses have to be helped up the steeper parts of the road to La Verna.

We one day heard a lively discussion as to the genesis of this name. (I believe that in English it should be called "Alvernia," by the way). One learned one held that it was derived from Laverna the old Umbrian goddess of thieves and bandits; and was fortified in his opinion by the fact that up to the time when it was taken over by the frati the mountain was a notorious resort of these gentry. While the other wise one contended that the name was a corruption from Alpe caverne (mountain full of caves) to Al verna. Riddled with caverns as the mountain certainly is, we still preferred the bandit theory. It fitted more into the feeling of the place.

About half a mile out from Bibbiena we stopped to visit the Dominican sanctuary of Santa Maria del Sasso with its interesting well-head; the fine intarsia work in the choir making one realize how near one is to Umbria. Of course there was a Della Robbia altar-piece; but what took our fancy more was the celebrated Madonna of the Dark (al Buio), a colored wooden statue in the crypt, which is an object of especial veneration. I suppose she is called upon for help by timorous infants in Casentino just as the New England child is exhorted to "remember George Washington" as an aid to going up to bed without a light.

Soon beyond this point our way descended through a narrow winding lane enclosed by high stone walls, where we narrowly escaped being run over by an enormous automobile which was swiftly and silently ascending. Hearing our horn made the chauffeur slow up a bit and at the next turn he was upon us so suddenly that Nanni was standing upon his hind legs between the radiator and our carriage, as there was no room to turn out. Our only revenge was



that as Nanni wouldn't back, the automobile had to; and angry enough its English owners were, although the whole incident was their own fault for not having sounded their horn on such a dangerous road.

It was after crossing the Ponte del Corsalone that the real climb began. The road was pretty well kept and wound through forests of oak and beech or rocky pasture-land. About half-way up we stopped to rest the animals and refresh ourselves at the house of the cantoniere where one may buy bread and salame (Bologna-sausage), wine, gazzoze (fizzy water), and postcards. The trapelante partook of the first three of these refreshments, while we drank deep of gazzoze and indited postcards to our families.

Then, on up through the even wilder scene till we reached La Beccia, the little settlement at the foot of the cliff where clings the convent.

After settling Nanni in a big stable with a black goat as companion and ordering the white horse to meet us the next afternoon at Ponte del Corsalone to haul us back up to Bibbiena, we went up to the limit of the little settlement of post-office, two rather wretched little inns and a few houses; turned into a lane and entered the Ospizio, where women visitors to La Verna sleep. Of course, they could not be allowed to pollute the sacred precincts of the monastery, where every male visitor is welcomed!

It is a low building solidly made of great stone blocks. We learned by the tablet over the door that this modern annex to the monastery had <sup>already</sup> been built some years when the Pilgrim Fathers first stepped upon ~~the~~ Plymouth Rock and our history began. Inside



Gate of the hospiz at La Beccia.



Monastery of La Verna,  
The Cortile.



it was divided into big rooms, four upstairs and three down. The smaller one down-stairs was that used by the two lay sisters of the third order of St. Francis who have charge of the Ospizio. The other two were great bare halls where the humbler women pilgrims sleep when there are great crowds on the mountain. Upstairs the rooms had each from six to eight enormous beds, capable of holding at least half a dozen people each. Luckily, we came on no particular holiday, so, as signore, were allowed to have a room to ourselves. In it were six of these capacious beds, six crucifixes on the wall, one window a foot square for air, (by some lucky miracle it opened -- we should not have been surprised had it not done so), and a saucer and cream-pitcher of water for bathing. Everything was scrupulously clean.

The Ospizio belongs to the Franciscans and as St. Francis exercised hospitality towards all, they welcome everyone to their holy mount. Although the women sleep at the Ospizio and the men up at the monastery itself, all eat together in the Foresteria (strangers' house), a part of the monastery. Here the food is prepared and served by the brown-robed frati (brothers); and very good it is, too. Sometimes there are as many as 200 women at once in the Ospizio, one of the sisters in charge told us. Those who can afford it leave money at the monastery, of course, but nothing is demanded. We were not even allowed to pay for the guide-book and postcards which we were given in the Foresteria.

From our Window we looked across a boulder-strewn pasture to the sheer face of the cliff which rises almost perpendicularly for 650 feet into the air. Two-thirds of the way up its scarred face we saw windows; above them discovered a faint roof line; and

realized that there clung the retreat so loved by our most beloved saint.

From La Beccia to the monastery there is a roughly paved lane which the truly pious tread with bare feet or even traverse on their knees. How many, down all the centuries since Francis first visited the mountain in 1213 have found peace after thus mortifying body and spirit? More than there are stones on the way, one may be sure.

At a sharp turn in the lane just as we seemed to reach sheer cliff where no further foothold would be possible, stood a little white-plastered building, so mean in appearance that it was only by chance that, peeping in at the tiny window with my impertinent American curiosity, I saw about a score of very dusty birds -- either stuffed or clay -- hanging from the ceiling by strings, and we realized that this was the Chapel of the Birds. Here, ~~having stopped~~ <sup>first</sup> on his <sup>having stopped</sup> visit to the mountain <sup>for</sup> breath, as we had done, I suppose, St. Francis and three brethren of the Order <sup>with</sup> the strong band of armed men sent with the frati to protect them from bandits, rested under an ancient oak. Suddenly they heard a chirruping, a twittering, the flutter of tiny wings, the beating from larger flights. The tree-top filled with myriads of birds of every conceivable species. Gaining courage, little by little, they came down from the branches and gathered closely about the gracious little brown figure of Francis. The more venturesome nestled in his lap, on his shoulders, in his hood -- finally crowding joyously into his hands; all making sweet reverences with their wings, and bowing their little heads, seeming in their soft twitterings to be welcoming their friend to their





The cliff of La Verna with the monastery.



Gateway of the monastery.

eyrie. And he caressed them and called them by the dear names of "brother" and "little blessed ones." When each had had his word from the saint, they all flew off again. Francis, turning to his companions, said: "Dearest brothers, I believe that it is really the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that we should make a home here on this mountain, as our little brothers the birds who live here show such happiness at our coming."

How we wished we hadn't seen those dusty make-believe birds! Our spirits were as full of reverence and love for the dear saint of brotherly love as any of that first flock of humble welcomers. And we were a bit dashed by that dust! Then our twentieth century minds were aghast at so giving away to superstition as to feel omens in such trivial things. In the philosophical discussion which followed, as we scrambled up the ever-steepening path, we mutually comforted one another by digging down into our school philology and deciding that "superstition" really meant "an excess of faith" -- which no one should object to having.

A massive arch, low and wide, opened to us through the high stone wall on our left, the precincts of the monastery proper. There was a guarded reserve about this gateway which was eloquent of the days when peace did not reign on the holy hill. Up under the arch we read: Non est in toto sanctior orbe mons. (There is not in all the world a more sacred mountain). There were also various notices in modern Italian on the walls; mostly forbidding begging and peddling anywhere on or about the premises. Under this ancient arch we passed to a low little cloister, with along one side a great stone seat now filled with peasant women





Suor Niccolina & Suor Colomba  
of the Suore Crocifisso  
And Suor Michelina & Suor Teresa  
of the Suore Franciscane.



The "Large" Church.

resting from their long walk. Then we came on to the sunny, flagged little Piazza del Quadrante, square in name only, as a more irregular group of buildings it would be difficult to find. Two sides of the Piazza are formed by stone edifices, on the others only a low stone parapet over which one gazes at a hundred hills, with scores of towns and shining valleys. In the center of the square stands a modern bronze statue of St. Francis releasing the turtledoves.

The story is that the saint met one day a young vendor of doves, and remonstrated with him for keeping his "little brothers" in captivity and handing them over for money to those who might abuse or kill them. Smitten with remorse at the saint's words, the boy loosed his stock. Instead of flying away, all the doves circled around their gentle advocate and followed him home, and built their nests about the hermitage, where their descendants live to this day. The little merchant also in his heart followed Francis, and when he grew to man's estate, joined the Order. And who can wonder?

The old well by the steps to the Foresteria, with its rude curb and heavy tiled roof had a modest but solid look in keeping with the place. It must be very deep as there is a very long chain which rattles and shrieks interminably before a comforting splash tells that the bucket has at last reached its goal. There were scores of peasants in the Piazza that clear June Sunday and each and every one ran that bucket up and down, and noisily drank therefrom at least once before and once after Mass. We hoped that they were all as healthy as they looked; or that the water of the well, like that of Lourdes, had great bactericidal powers.





In the loggiata of the "Large" Church.



In the Chiesina.

Terracotta altar-pieces by the school of the Della Robbias.

But that which claimed and held our attention above everything else was the glorious view from the parapet;-- over tree-clad hills, along valleys where ran shining silver rivers, on to the greater heights beyond -- clear-cut in the soft June sunshine,-- truly a spot to uplift the soul! Where one could love the world purely without feeling its fleshly lure.

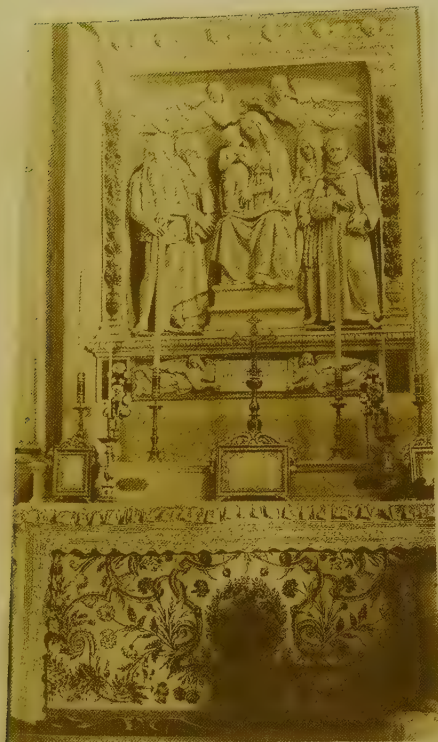
After Mass we wandered about the clean, rather bare church, the gem-like coloring of the Della Robbia plaques and altar-pieces flashing out bright and pure from the dead white calcimining of the walls and roof. The terra-cotta altar-pieces -- the Annunciation, the Adoration, the Ascension and the beautifully balanced composition of the Madonna of Refuge -- were lovely and appealing as Andrea Della Robbia is when working at his best. These porcelains are peculiarly fitted to ornament the churches of the frati poverelli (little poor brothers) as from clay, the humblest of art mediums, has been created the most loveably spiritual representations of the great moments, of the great sentiments of our faith.

We were courteously joined by one of the monks who offered to take us about to see the principal holy places on the Mount. First he showed us through the choir with its beautiful intarsia work; and the sacristy where we saw a dainty gothic reliquary which held a rude little wooden bowl from which St. Francis ate when here at La Verna, and a broken glass from which he is said to have drunk at the Castle of Count Orlando Catani of Chiusi who gave the mountain to the friars. Our guide, who has the title of santuarista or "keeper of the sanctuary," told us again the dramatic story of the gift. How St. Francis,



hearing that there was a great feast being held at Montefeltro with many of the finest cavaliers as guests, said to Brother Leo, "Let us go up to this festivity for I feel that we may gather good spiritual fruit there." <sup>97</sup> So they went up together; and when they had arrived in the midst of the noble throng, St. Francis mounted upon a wall and preached with such fervor and loving logic that the cavaliers were enthralled and hung upon his words. Especially one, Count Orlando, who had come from a distance. After the sermon this powerful noble sought out the humble friar and after "reasoning with him about the facts of his soul both that day and the day after," finally offered to give the Mountain of La Verna "a rocky, wild, and desert spot" to Francis, and his Order as a place of penitence and prayer; which, after investigation, finding the place eminently fitted for such exercises, Francis accepted most thankfully.

Then we went into the Chiesina (small church), whose real name of Santa Maria degli Angeli is seldom heard. Here were more terra-cottas. That by Andrea Della Robbia over the main altar is particularly interesting as it records the founding and building of this church itself. Once a tiny rustic oratory stood on this spot, the first erected at La Verna and much of it the work of St. Francis himself. Here one night the saint had a vision of Madonna which appeared in the place where the altar-piece now is. In the vision the Virgin told Francis that she would like to have him build her a stone church on that site and gave him many architectural suggestions and the exact measurements -- all of which were followed out. So the artist, simple and literal soul that he was, depicts the Assump-



The Madonna of Refuge.  
in the "Large" Church.



The Madonna della Cintola.  
Chiesina.

Altarpieces by Andrea della Robbia.



tion in the usual fashion with the Virgin dropping her girdle to St. Thomas as she rises from the flower-filled tomb to disappear in a cloud of angel faces; -- but the girdle is marked off in divisions like a tape measure.

"Observe how practical was our Lady," said reverently one of the four nuns with whom we were being taken about. These four, healthy, unworldly women added much to our pleasure and profit during the day. Their childlike interest in miracles (and in photography), their passionate sincerity at the holy places on the Mount, their simple, sweet faith in and enjoyment of it all, was just the one touch needed to make it perfect to us, too.

Before we could explore farther it was luncheon time. We went into the Foresteria and partook of a most excellent lunch served today by the friar who cooked it, as there were few guests on the mountain. The nuns ate in a room specially reserved for them. Sometimes the monastery serves over 700 meals in one day, we were told, although 250 are all they can seat at once. Even that is quite a party. The meals served to guests are much the same throughout the season, except on fast days. Of course, the friars do not fare nearly so sumptuously. // We had a very delicious rich soup, a speciality of Franciscan guest-houses, so the ~~said~~ brother told us; maccheroni with sugo (gravy); lesso (boiled beef); bracciolini; cherries; caccio pecorino (sheep's milk cheese) and coffee, with two kinds of dark bread and red wine. The friar who served us was a most courteous and cultivated gentleman who, we gathered later from the santuarista, had a position of some importance in one of the Florentine

monasteries in winter, but had volunteered for this hard menial work at La Verna to help the resident friars during their busy season.

After lunch we climbed up to the Penna (literally "feather"), the highest point of the mountain. Through an open gateway we passed with a throng of peasants to the wild, almost virgin forest back of the low dark buildings of the monastery. Under great pines and spreading beeches, through purple shadows and splashes of yellow sunshine we scrambled up the steep path bordered on either side by a profusion of sweet little woodland flowers. The peasants had stopped at the first little glade and we had the mountain top all to ourselves.

The Sunday silence was broken only by the soft whispering of the trees as they told again of joy gained through pain, of the sweet spirit of the founder of this retreat, of the love of all things great and small which rules the mountain. And then the Signorina softly recited in her own beautiful tongue St. Francis' glorious canticle to the sun and the moon, to the stars, to the wind, to fire and to water, to "brother body" and to "sister death," and to all created things.

So we came at length to the summit; but here, too, the great trees clustered thickly obscuring the view, and it was by a little chapel on the path below the Penna that we suddenly saw mezzo mondo (half the world) spread out before us. The whole green length of the valley of Casentino dotted with villages and storied castles; the blue mountains of Pratomagno, by Romagna round to Umbria, tossing up their heads on the horizon; a shining



point of light which showed Lake Trasimene shimmering in the sun; and, faint and far off, the high ridge of Monte Leone where perches the tiny Republic of San Marino. To our right our old friend Mount Falterona, cradle of the River Arno, to our left Monte Fumaiolo from the other side of which Father Tiber begins his course. No wonder that Dante called La Verna "the rude rock between Tiber and Arno."

Once more at the monastery we rejoined the friendly little nuns, hunted up our santuarista, and proceeded on the round of the holy places.

First to a little chapel where we were shown, under the altar, the stone called the Mensa (table) of St. Francis. Once when the saint was much depressed, Jesus appeared to him and, sitting upon this stone, comforted him as to the permanence of the Franciscan Order and the ultimate triumph of His religion.

Down innumerable moss-grown, narrow steps in a wild rent in the cliff we descended to a rocky chasm which the dampness has covered with fungus growth and tiny ferns. On one hand the rock rose sheer and smooth as if fashioned by the hand of man. Over us hung a great mass of stone between which and the wall of the cliff one could see the sky, so that the rock appeared hung in mid-air. It was the famous Sasso Spicco (literally "torn-off rock"). It was revealed to St. Francis in a dream that La Verna was one of the mountains torn asunder at the moment of the Crucifixion; and that this mass which "hangs on only by a two-pronged tooth," as the santuarista put it, was the result of that cataclysm. St. Francis loved to spend days and nights in prayer under this rock and often the Devil bombarded him through the crack with stones in a vain effort to distract



Descent to the Sasso Spicco.



Entrance to the cavern where St. Francis  
used to sleep.



the pious thoughts of the saint by fears of his personal safety.

Nearby this place is a little shrine with a glazed terracotta plaque which pictures St. Francis plunging his hands into an aperture in the trunk of a great beech tree. The story is that <sup>here</sup> when the friars first came to La Verna an ancient beech "of immeasurable greatness" was growing. A convenient little hollow in its bole was adapted in those simple days to be ~~used~~ used as a holy water basin. After he received the Stigmata, St. Francis plunged his tortured hands into the water here for relief; and from that time forth until the tree itself died and crumbled away, the water renewed itself, as if there were a living spring within the old trunk. This water was considered a specific for diseases of the eye. Now all traces of tree and spring have long since disappeared, but this little chapel marks the site of the kindly chestnut.

Into still another cavern we were led by the santuarista. The entrance to this one, under two masses of rock leaning against one another, was so low that one had to almost crawl in. Inside it was cold and chill, the walls and roof covered with green slime, while moisture dropped silently from infinitesimal apertures in the stone. To one side was a raised ledge, one end slightly higher than the other, covered with a stout iron grating. This was the Letto (bed) of St. Francis, near which was a great fissure in the floor of the cave. Here on this clammy couch the dear little anchorite used to stretch his tired limbs when nature could no longer resist the long vigils and spiritual wrestlings. Well may one believe the enthusiastic santuarista when he said that even the most worldly-minded felt compunctions as to their de-



The procession to the holy places.



Andrea della Robbia's great altar-piece  
Chapel of the Stigmata.



pendence on material comforts, and sympathized with the "Seraphic Father" in his search for pure spirit.

Here our guide excused himself as he had to take part in the function in the Large Church which preceded the procession. Quite naturally, wishing to lose nothing, we followed him. In the church there was a sound of chanting from the hidden choir. Soon the procession of brown-robed friars, of novices and of priests came singing down the aisle and out of the church, along the covered way to the Chapel of the Stigmata. Here all prostrated themselves singing the antiphon in honor of St. Francis: -- "Signasti hic, Domine, servum tuum Franciscum redemptionis nostrae,"-- chanted the smothered voices of the kneeling men. At the word "hic" (there) two white-faced novices raised themselves on either side of the altar and pointed dramatically to the spot where Francis was found after that night of ecstasy. A moving and beautiful service which is held twice every day, throughout the year. Even in the most severe Winter storms, it is never omitted or curtailed.

We lingered in the chapel after the procession had moved on to visit in rotation all the holy places, admiring the beautiful Della Robbia altar-piece -- a Crucifixion. The coloring and whole composition were most impressive and we remembered that it was probably made in Florence at the time when Savonarola was preaching his great religious revival. The friendly nuns, corrected and set straight as to dates and details by the sacristan, told us the history of St. Francis' agony and glorification on this spot. <sup>91</sup>Of course, then, there was no chapel nor building of any kind here. For many nights previous to the feast of the Holy Cross, Francis had prayed

on this spot, and had had visions, had in ecstasies spoken with his Lord, had macerated his body and exalted his spirit. Finally on the early morning of the feast, (Sept. 1224), an hour before sunrise, as he prayed to suffer and to love as during His earthly life the Saviour of mankind had suffered and loved, there appeared in the sky not yet tinged with dawn, a Seraphim enfolded in six gleaming wings. At first Francis was frightened; then his body was filled with racking pains, his soul was possessed with surpassing joy and love. And all the mountain was wrapped in light -- so that shepherds on the slopes awoke and led their flocks to pasture, thinking it was day. And from that time until his death, Francis bore upon his body the signs of his Lord's passion; and in his soul burned ever more and more ardently the light of His love.

These "signs" were a phenomenon well attested to by all who approached the saint during his last two years of life. There appeared darkened excrescences in the palms of his hands and on the soles of his feet like the heads of great iron nails. While on the other side of his members appeared larger hard swellings as of the spikes of these same nails. In his side opened a wound which never more healed but continually dropped blood. Francis always sought to cover both hands and feet to prevent being made a show of, but his ardent nature made gesticulation necessary to him; and the pain in his feet made walking almost an impossibility. So concealment was really out of the question.

Silently we parted from the sisters and left the monastery with hearts too full for talk. The carriage was waiting for us at La Beccia and with an almost tearful "a rivederci"



(till we see one another again), we turned our backs on the scene of these wonders and drove off down the mountain-side towards the sunny world of every day.





## Chapter VII.

Across Italy to Siena.

He was an excellent chaperone for adventurous ladies, our Nanni. During all our months of companionship I do not recall any time when he gave way to over-sentimentality. Efficient, humorous, affectionate, he was; but sentimental -- never! Today, as his subdued mistress applied the break and the carriage by its own momentum moved gently off down the mountain, Nanni, having nothing much to do, perked up his woolly ears and began to look about for adventure. Twenty-four hours of companionship with a dull black goat and a tremendous lot of oats had disposed him to a lively interest in life. <sup>H</sup> Soon after we started we were passed by a wagonette drawn by two frisky big horses and filled with a holiday crowd from Bibbiena. Here was just the incentive Master Nanni had been looking for. Off after the swiftly rolling carriage he flew, like a rabbit fleeing to cover. The driver of the horses entered into the spirit of the game and kept his team at just a tantalizing lead, while Nanni ran desperately down the slope after them. <sup>H</sup> At first, we didn't mind, though much disgusted that the passengers in the wagonette could be leaving La Verna in such a sporting mood. Then we began to fear for our steed's little white legs should he make a mis-step. Anyone who thinks it was an easy matter to check his wild flight displays a shocking lack of knowledge of donkey nature. I am large and Nanni absurdly small; but it was some minutes before, almost telescoping him in the struggle, I could calm the ambition of the little beast and induce him to resume a more reasonable pace. <sup>H</sup> Then for a short time we

just jogged on through wild, rock-strewn pasture-land/beginning to be brightened by the blossoming broom. Not having any work to do, the road winding ever downward, Nanni began to be bored -- and a bored donkey is a naughty one, every time. First, he wavered from side to side of the road, taking an occasional nibble at the leaves of the scrub-chestnuts, or plucking a sprig of broom which he would flourish about before attempting to eat. We were laughingly enjoying his antics when, without any warning, he suddenly lay down; gently but decisively. In my consternation, I forgot his nationality and implored him in English: "Oh, Nanni! Please get up again!" Whereupon, with the same gently bored air, he did get up; and went on down the hill. We realized as never before how advantageous it was to have a cultivated, bi-lingual donkey. But the ~~look~~, impishly malicious<sup>look</sup> of satisfaction on his countenance when we got out and carefully looked over the harness to see if we could find any reason for his prostration, was a little hard to bear with true Franciscan humility. ¶ We have since discovered that this is typical of all donkeys -- bored, they will not be without protest. In fact, I shall never again after this summer's experiences, expend much sympathy on those strong-charactered animals. If anything really annoys them, they won't go. Beating moves them very little -- except to make them lie down. ¶ The sores on some of the charcoal-burners' donkeys had at one time made me nearly sick with sympathy. Not now. In the mountains we often met long strings of terribly overladen and galled donkeys. The galls seemed not to worry them, but the flies did; and to keep those beasts at their work,



it was necessary to shield them from flies. So these donkeys, although driven by half-starved, bare-legged men, would all have long stockings on their four legs and some sort of a covering drawn over their stomachs. And when a sudden rain storm would beat down, the drivers would hasten to tear off some of their own none too plentiful garments to cover their animals' ears. For, if the ears get wet, an ordinary donkey stands desolately drooping until they dry; unless he is outrageously beaten. In that case, he lies down and refuses to get up again. <sup>H</sup> I have heard, though this I have never seen, that like the camel, the donkey is never overladen. If more is put on to him than Mr. Donkey considers proper, he lies down and rolls till relieved of the excess weight. I can quite believe it. Nanni, however, was really a dear little creature -- when his inherited instincts were not too strong for him. And even then, he "came round" without much trouble.

In spite of these more or less disturbing interludes, we soon reached Bibbiena and the comforts of the Albergo Amorosi (which I should like to translate literally as the "Abode of the Amorous ones," but can't with truth as "Amorosi" is the name of the proprietors); and reveled in the plumbing for which my <sup>twentieth</sup> ~~20th~~ century American soul yearns; -- the last of such delights till we should reach Siena. Why, with the electric light, telegraph and telephone everywhere, the comfortable decency of running water in every house and an adequate sewage system do not appeal to the average Italian is difficult to understand. Most probably, it is because primitive substitutes for these latter products of civilization have been in use for many centuries, and entirely

new things, like electrical appliances, are so much more showy that money and initiative to install them are easily found.

The drive from Bibbiena to Talla was full of interest but very different from any we had taken previously, as we saw no high mountains till near the end of the day. We slipped easily down from Bibbiena to the Arno. Then, for some miles, we kept the rocky river-bed to our right, the waters of the young stream/still retaining the blue glacier-tints of its natal innocence; while rounded hills, covered to the very tops with silver olive-trees or the denuded skeletons of the mulberries, rose to the left of the road. ¶ We were still in the silk-worm country. When we failed to make the proper turn to the right after crossing the Torrente Corsalone, a teamster who was driving a truck piled high with great willow baskets of cocoons, shouted at and actually ran after us, to put us straight. He was carrying the cocoons to Rassina, and had heard that two signorine americane were going that way with a donkey carriage. We were not surprised at his knowledge of our plans; but did think it kind of him to take so much trouble for perfect strangers.

Rassina seemed a very busy place. There were lime-kilns pouring out smoke while making from the native lime-stone rocks, the cement which is exported from this town in such quantities. And there were several big silk factories -- Filande di Bozzoli -- where the silk is reeled from the good cocoons, washed, and prepared for the weaving mills which, we were told, are all in alt Italia (the north). In spite of our aversion



to their odor, we were beginning to be interested in the silk industry. <sup>4</sup> There was another sort of silk factory here, a Filande di Debolini, where all the injured, double, or discolored cocoons and the flossy fibres removed from the outside of the good ones at the Filande di bozzoli, are converted into spun silk, used principally for stockings and underclothes. The best silk is not spun. We gathered this information from assorted groups of Rassinesi, which collected about us whenever we stopped to look at the buildings. These edifices were new and as well lighted as watch-factories, by the way. We were told that one company employed 1300 girls.

On the outskirts of the town we passed over a high-arched, ancient bridge across the Arno. It must date from very early times, probably from before the Christian era, to judge by its shape. Not only had it the typical almost peaked arch of the average Roman small bridge, but it was so narrow that two carts could not pass except at one widened spot near the center. This is one of the charms of new Italy. Here was a flourishing manufacturing town with new and up-to-date factories, yet which was obviously connected with a past so far from present-day life that we call it "classic." Indeed, the name itself points to a very ancient origin of the town, for the Etruscans called themselves "Rasena," and we are here near one of the early boundaries of Etruria.

After Rasina, there was much less cultivation; and soon, high on a wooded hill, we saw the round tower of the ancient Pieve a Socano. This, so different from the square

towers we had been seeing, aroused our interest; and we learned that it owed its circular shape to having been built on foundations laid by those matchless old masons, the Etruscans; or even, so some authorities claimed, on the still older ruins of that mysterious race which resisted for a while the onward march of the little less mysterious Etruscans when these latter swept across this part of Italy about 1000 B.C. It was our first taste of the inexplicable Etruscan.

Soon, we left the Arno and drove for several miles through an oak forest, which was only broken by the picturesque hamlet of Salutio. High up on a hill-top over the Torrente Salutio, the fragments of an old wall stirred our curiosity and rearoused our sense of romance. The road was gradually ascending, as we proved by two unfailing signs. Nanni refused to go faster than a walk; and the forest changed from oaks to scrub-chestnut and beech trees, which waxed larger as we approached Talla. ¶ We found this a bustling little village, very much alive, as it was fair day and the streets were fairly blocked by piles of great wattled baskets filled with bozzoli\*; with munching mules and donkeys, their noses deep in their evening meal; and with a gesticulating, vociferous, but courteous crowd of swarthy peasants. ¶ Such narrow irregular streets as we had to worm our way through in Talla; with the houses put in every which way, introducing unexpected jogs into the street line.

Awfully jolly, we thought, and certainly most unusual in an Italian town where the blank fronts of house after house with

\*cocoons



no projections more substantial than tiny balconies, is apt to appear very monotonous to American eyes. Also a bit inhuman; no hint of a cozy home within. ¶ Talla is really beautifully situated. It lies in a narrow hollow between two great ramifications of that spur of the Apennines called the Alpe di Santa Trinità; over the higher of which we are to pass on the morrow. Two little torrents run together here: the Capraia (literally "goat girl." Can't you see this little heroine of sorts leaping from rock to rock down the mountain-side, as her hurrying namesake does today?) and the Lavanzoni, the name of which (great wash) would indicate a depth of water which was not in evidence when we were there. ¶ Beside the town on a sharp needle-like crag, still called by the people the "Castellaccio" though all traces of any fortress on this rock had disappeared before history began, stood the tiny old parish church and a few very small, ancient houses. In one of these was born the famous Guido Monaco, better known as Guido of Arezzo, who shortly after the year 1000 A.D. invented or rather, made practical, the modern system of <sup>musical</sup> notation. ¶ Fra Guittone, as he is familiarly called, seems to have been a most lovable character from all we could gather here. And indeed, the people of Talla impressed us as most gentle and polite. We particularly liked the tablet in memory of Guido set into the façade of the little church. It set forth in rather shaky Latin that the stone was not to commemorate the inventor of musical notation as his fame needed no inscription to immortalize it, but rather that the young people of Talla might realize that even a child of poor parents, born

in a lowly hut on the mountains, as was Fra Guittone, might by a clean, industrious life, and well directed, honest endeavor, arrive at any heights among the great of earth; which, it seemed to us, showed a very nice and delicate understanding for a country village. ¶ I always remember the story of how the contemporary pope, John XIX, called Fra Guittone to Rome from Arezzo where the frate had worked out his system of musical notation, and also a method of teaching music which he had found most efficacious with his choir-boys. With him to the Vatican Guido carried an antiphonarium written in his system of notes on a clef. So charmed was the pope by this musical writing that he refused to terminate the audience before he had himself learned to sing by it. We owe much to the little choir-master who lived nearly a thousand years ago in this obscure Italian hamlet -- more for his crystallization and clarification of already existing systems of notation, perhaps, than for what he might actually have originated.

Such excitement as we caused at the neat little inn of "Tonio" Bacci. The sposa got quite breathless in her efforts to produce a banquet worthy an American lady. She even had some electric lights specially strung up across the vine-clad terrace that we might dine all'aria aperta. And, after a delicious supper, enlivened by a really classic cat fight on a neighboring roof, we retired to a room hung with wide lace -- across the windows, around the bed, over the canopy, about each chair -- never have I seen such a quantity of crochet all at once. Some of it was a bit messy as if, in our especial honor, it had just been hastily haled from some old hiding place; as I have no doubt it had been.



After luncheon the next day we set off again across the mountains. Up a winding, well-made road, over the pass of Poggio alla Croce which follows the break between Prato Magno and the Alpe di Santa Trinità in the high chain of the Apennines. Of course we had a trapelo; and a (very talkative) trapelantè. He gave us what the Signorina is pleased to call "advices;" One of which was that we should give Nanni at least a pint of wine(!) a day; "And then you will see how he shall take himself force from it." Our experiences that afternoon led us to try following his suggestion. It really seemed that Nanni was a bit friskier for <sup>this addition to his diet.</sup> ~~it~~ ^ We would pour a half liter of red wine over his oats and that dissipated donkey would fairly gobble his dinner.

Our way lay through rough pasture land covered with a riot of blossoming broom. There is no color more purely jocund, more innocently brilliant than that of the flowers of the broom; and in June and July these Tuscan mountains are fairly radiant with the glory of Coeur de Lion's emblem. Actual forest we did not traverse. We were getting pretty high for big trees. At one point the trapelante pointed out a barren waste of torn-up rock which he called le buche (the holes). He said that there, while he was away on his servizio (i.e. conscripted into the army), there had been dug up "who knows how great treasures from the graves of giants." Probably excavations which had brought to light Etruscan or pre-Etruscan remains. It is something of a shock for an American from the frontiers of civilization to discover that the story of Rome is not really ancient and mythical at all, but quite modern and pellucid beside the ever unfathomable

ble Etruscan, Pelasgic, Umbrian histories which have been enacted here and have left ineradicable marks on this wonderful palimpsest which we call Italy.

The summit of this Pass of Poggio alla Croce was some <sup>thirteen hundred</sup> ~~1300~~ feet above Talla; an altitude which we reached in about two hours. Then, bidding farewell to the trapelante, we jogged off across barren and deserted mountain country, hoping to reach Terranuova before night set in. But Nanni had other plans, and simply would not get over the ground. We thought he might be hungry, so fed him oats by the handful till he became almost torpid. Then we tolled him along with clover-blossoms and daisies, wild mountain pinks and succulent grasses, getting more and more irritated in spite of being obliged to laugh ourselves to the verge of hysterics at the wiles of that wretched little beast; but not knowing exactly what to do about it. ¶ Finally, after some hours of this emotional but not rapid progression,, we came to a cantoniere breaking stones by the roadside. We appealed to him desperately, almost with tears, relating the languid lying-downs and the reluctant getting-ups of our donkey and asking anxiously what could be the matter. It is always pleasant to feel that one has brought a little light and innocent joy into colorless lives; to know that the world is a brighter place for our having passed through it. Only sometimes such blessings are disguised. And when that cantoniere hung on to his thin sides and ~~rocked~~ to and fro with consuming laughter, we did not at first realize what a compliment he was paying us. At last he wiped his streaming eyes and indicated that all the naughty one needed was a good spanking. We gave him the whole of four



cents to administer that chastisement -- and he earned it. ¶ For a mile or so Nanni trotted on with great willingness. Then he discovered that the cantoniere of the strong arm and relentless whip was not in the carriage, and began his former tactics. Well -- we arrived at the little hamlet of San Giustino in time for supper, lame from laughing; but with my right wrist and both of our dispositions pretty well strained in the struggle. Here we had a novel experience, unique on the trip. No one paid any attention to us. No crowd collected about us. No small boys tried to blow our horn. At every corner (there weren't many) was a pile of baskets filled with cocoons and surrounded by an eager, bartering throng. All the inhabitants of San Giustino were so keen on their trading that we were simply ignored. At the inn, which we finally discovered, we had ourselves to unharness and feed Nanni with the help of the maid, a sturdy little contadinetta about thirteen years old, who told us that her servizio was very hard as the padrone was very absent-minded, and could never think of but one thing at a time anyhow. ¶ There was only one bedroom left for guests at the inn. All the rest of the house had been turned into a filanda, and the air was stifling with the horrid odor of the cooking cocoons. Of course, we had to inspect the new industry to satisfy our silk-mad hosts. Although nearly choked by the stench we found the process of reeling the silk from the cocoons interesting. This "reeling" is done to make a very long, continuous soft strand of the fibres from fifteen or twenty cocoons at once. ¶ Soon after the cocoons are formed they are subjected to dry heat to kill the dormant worm inside, and are then sorted according to color and size. When the time

comes to reel the silk, they are put in a pan of water not quite boiling, and are stirred about with a bundle of twigs till the water has softened the glutinous substance which binds the fibres, and the outside floss gets entangled in the twigs. Then, very rapidly, this floss is stripped off the cocoon till the main thread of the fibre is found. ¶ Carried by little girls from the hot water vat, the softened bozzoli\*are put in a big tray of luke-warm water in front of the reelers who take the thread from several cocoons at once, pass it through guides so as not to tangle it, and reel it on lightly turning reels such as our great grandmothers used for their thread spun from wool or flax. There are from four to six of these guides for each strand, and the silk from them is twisted a little by hand as it passes to the reel. Great sensitiveness of touch seemed to be required of the reelers; and we did hope that their sense of smell had been obliterated.

¶ Persistent contact with the silk industry had by now engendered a good deal of curiosity about it. In San Guistino no one wanted to talk about anything else, so we were able somewhat to assuage this sudden thirst for knowledge. Most of the cocoons were about an inch and a half long. A little fuzzy on the outside (the floss) and a sort of hard parchment underneath that. A good average cocoon is expected to give 40,000 meters (!) of double thread, besides the floss. The bad ones -- those which are injured or discolored or those which cannot be reeled because two worms settling side by side have crossed fibres with one another -- are not reeled but are boiled in soapy water and washed;

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\*cocoons



and then macerated and spun much as flax is. The good silk comes off the reels in beautiful creamy skeins, and is sent to the weaving factories of the north in that form. We were interested to learn that these also underwent much washing in soapy water, except that which was to be woven into mourning crêpe. The stiffness in this material is the original gluey substance given off by the silkworms when making their cocoons.

The semi (eggs) of the silk worms are imported through the big manufacturers. One ounce of semi, according to our San Giustino informant, should produce 40,000 worms, which eat something over half a ton of leaves before making cocoons. (Doesn't it seem astounding?) Three times between hatching and becoming dormant the worms "moult"; that is, cast their skins. At these periods they have to be kept fasting in a dark and quiet room. Any noise would seriously injure the silk out-put. The cooler the room the larger the cocoon, but the more slowly the worms mature. After going in bosca (being placed on bushes) the worms form cocoons in three or four days. If not heat-treated to kill the insect the moth emerges in from two to three weeks. The growers hereabouts used to save their own "seed" by allowing moths from the best cocoons to mature and lay eggs; but the stock became diseased by this method and now, as I have said, the manufacturers who buy the reeled or spun silk supply the seed to growers.

The only person in San Guistino who seemed to appreciate us as strangers and wayfarers was an enthusiastic fellow-member of the Touring Club, the apothecary, to whom we had applied in default of a doctor, to get a bandage for my swollen wrist. I had sprained that indispensable joint trying to emulate the vigorous methods



A village washing place.



of the cantoniere with reluctant Nanni. But the next morning as we were about to depart, the town suddenly awoke to the fact that there were two strange travellers in their midst, one from the magical land across the seas; and we could hardly work our way through the crowd of interested citizens, and get off along the wide white road to Montevarchi. ¶ We had told the friendly apothecary and the absent-minded padrone of the inn that we were going to lunch at Paterna, a town we had found marked on the map half-way between San Guistino and Montevarchi. Both had immediately said that we could find nothing to eat there; but had later changed to the opinion that we probably could. So we were expecting nothing unusual at our noon-day halt.

At first the road, clinging to the flank of the mountain, passed through forests of oak and beech and chestnut, all lighted up by the flowers of the ginesta. The many gulleys in the mountain side were crossed by substantial stone bridges under which rushed the little torrents formed by yesterday's rain. By every pool were thrifty and industrious housewives busily engaged in beating and sousing the family wash. Italian peasants may not bathe themselves much but they certainly launder their clothes with astonishing frequency. All sorts of garments which we should not consider exactly suitable for laundry work are washed here quite as a matter of course -- men's clothes, for instance. One continually sees not only trousers, coats and vests, but even teamsters' overcoats with fur collars (!) spread over a wall drying. ¶ I have often wondered why viciously beating soiled clothes in the chilly and frequently muddy waters of any chance stream, as is done in Italy, should result in any change for the better

in their hue. Today the Signorina explained the mystery to me. The beating process was only rinsing, it appeared. All of the clothes to be washed are collected together and the spots rubbed with soap. Then the things are packed closely in a big tub, the finer materials, like handkerchiefs and embroideries, at the bottom, then the coarser; graded up to the before-mentioned overcoats. Over all is placed about two inches of wood ashes (oh shades of vanished shirt-waists which have crumbled under my buttoning fingers; now I began to understand your frailty!) and boiling water is poured on till the tub is filled. The next day the things are carried to the washing place and rinsed and beaten and wrung until the last vestige of ashes, of dirt or of buttons has disappeared.

We were leaving the high mountains behind us and getting down to the great plain which lies between Siena and the Apennines. Plain it is only in as much as it is not distinctly mountainous. To our left lay a great expanse of broken country. Some mountains but no long ranges of heaven-touching heights such as we had been travelling among. On an isolated hill nearby perched the picturesque little town of Trajana. Its towers and closely enclosing stone walls looked most enticing and we were much disappointed that no road led thither from our highway. <sup>97</sup> Getting lower we left the forest and entered into a richly cultivated district all the fields having a border of denuded mulberry trees. They are not like the mulberry trees I have seen in America, even when not shorn of almost every leaf, as only the white-fruited variety is suited to the needs of the silk-worms, and at home the purple fruited sort is the more common. At least, as I have seen



them. ¶ About noon we came to a well-kept-up estate, the dignified and handsome house of the owners setting far back from the road at the end of a fine avenue of beech trees, while the peasant houses, stables, blacksmith shop, etc., were near the highway. On questioning some small children by the roadside, we learned, to our dismay, that this was Paterna. Our map had deceived us. There was no town here at all, not even an appalto.<sup>?</sup> What was worse, there was no town nearby. It was midday and very warm on this sheltered southern slope of the mountain. Nanni needed rest and food. So did we; for we never travelled during the heat of the day. The children were very un-encouraging concerning luncheon. ¶ However, we decided to send our cards to the fattore (the manager of an estate under the mezzeria system). Then we discovered that Paterna was the villa belonging to some friends of the Signorina's family, and all was smiles and hospitality. Nanni was lodged like a regal charger; while a smiling, bare-footed peasant woman served us a delicious luncheon in the dark, cool bosca; the fattore himself contributing fine linen and dishes. The owners were not in villa and the house was closed; but we fared exceedingly well with our al fresco meal and nap. The peasants slew a goose and a brace of doves, and gathered lettuce, radishes and cress for a salad; and a great bowl of deep red cherries for dessert. The goose was converted into a most delicious stew with mushrooms and tomatoes, oil and a shade of garlic. The pigeons were grilled and served with the salad. How this meal was gotten up in the hour which elapsed between our arrival and its appearance on the quaint stone table in the bosca, I leave to more able housewives than we were to explain. It seemed little short of magic

to us,--but white magic; very, very white. <sup>¶</sup> The fattore presented us with a basket of cherries and two lovely bouquets from the giardino when we left; and the hospitable peasants were all smiles and auguri that we might have a buon viaggio, and politely expressed wishes that we might return to Paterna. Nanni had been groomed, had eaten many oats and had drunk deep of a beverone (water with a handful of flour in it), and felt as perky as if he had been the real horse he had been treated like.

We bowled quickly down to Montevarchi, the even tenor of our open, sunlit way through grain fields and orchards only interrupted by the hamlet of Ganghereto and our triumphal progress along the main street of Terranuova-Bracciolini, accompanied by all the male inhabitants under sixteen years of age pertaining to that ancient city and every woman person large or small who could possibly tear along in our wake. As soon as we entered under the castellated gate at the east end of the town, a glad shout went up, and until we passed out from the precisely similar old gate in the western wall, we were the center of an animated throng who discussed us, our rig, our characters, and Nanni's, exactly as if we had been a cinemetograph. Never a word did they address to us. The town was a clean, flagged, little mediaeval city much like Lastra-a-Signa near Florence, with the same high castellated walls, and great arched gateways at opposite ends of the main street.

Just beyond Terranuova we crossed the Arno on its way back north to Florence. The river had flowed south until it



caught sight of Arezzo when, as Dante says: "it disdainfully turns up its nose" at the Arentines (whom Dante here designates as "curs")\* and changes direction. Then along its flat valley we went into Montevarchi, Nanni all content to be on level ground once more. Incited by the post-diligence passing him, our steed attracted much favorable comment by catapulting himself (and us) into the city at a most furious pace. <sup>H</sup> Just outside the town we passed the picturesque Church of the Lily (Chiesa del Giglio) standing by a low-arched bridge which doubtless marks the position of an old ford across the yellow little stream. The church had a sweet loggia all about it, like those Fra Angelico loved to paint; and a gaily tiled dome, the whole made still more effective by clumps of shivering, silver poplars and one tall sentinel of an ancient cypress.

Everyone in Montevarchi tried to make us go to see the Museo which is filled with fossils dug out of the limestone rocks of the neighborhood; but we do not care for fossils and, with difficulty, managed to escape the weary visit. But we did allow ourselves to be beguiled into going to the Cappucine monastery; and it was not worth while. <sup>H</sup> The cathedral was, though! Not particularly interesting now, as an edifice, there are still two chapels which no lover of the gentle art of the Della Robbias and their school should miss seeing. One is the chapel of the Confraternity, just to the left of the high altar. This did not look much like a chapel, as in it are deposited, without much regard to ecclesiastical order, the parts of what was an enormous polychrome terracotta monument to the Counts Guerra. It was formerly on the façade of the cathedral. How it must have shed light and grace on that dingy little piazza!

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\* Purgatorio XIV, 48 "disdegnosa torce il naso"

One would think there would be popular riots until it be replaced. I am sure that were that great mass of color and movement in the air, Montevarchi would not have left on us such a dull, utilitarian impression. ¶ The principal part of the monument is the large frieze which pictures the Guerras' only claim to fame; and is interesting as a product of the Della Robbia studio inasmuch as there is no Madonna, no saint, no angel, in the whole composition. The frieze is crowded with figures; horses and men-at-arms on the left; innumerable clerics with a general background of mediaeval Montevarchi on the right; while the center shows Count Guido Guerra on his knees, his squire and principal knights kneeling behind him, presenting to the bishop the sweetly modelled gothic reliquary containing the miraculously crystalized drop of the Virgin's milk which is supposed to have dropped from the Child's lips during the Flight into Egypt; and which Count Guido had somehow come into possession of during his service in the Crusades. ¶ The various pieces of the remainder of the monument -- saints, angels, putti, architectural details, etc. -- pretty well fill up the rest of the chapel; but, of course, the vigorously conceived frieze, with its white figures and pure blue sky, extending as it does for nearly the whole length of the side wall, claims and holds the attention to the detriment of the other admirable pieces. ¶ Besides this Chapel of the Confraternity, there is the Capello del Latte Santo where the relic used to be kept. This chapel is a blaze of color being entirely lined with gaily enameled terra cottas. There are figures of San Damiano and of San Rocco on either side of the shrine, showing that the chapel must have been thus decorated either during or after some plague time. The sagrestano also showed us a large





A Tuscan wayside shrine.



In fly time.

silver-gilt cross which he said was the work of Benvenuto Cellini. We felt that his patriotism was greater than his discrimination.

At Montevarchi, we added the last link to Nanni's armor against flies, -- some gaudy red and yellow dangles, like sprays of kite-tails, which we hung in rows across his brow and about his breast. He is now a very well-dressed little person. The kerchief around his tum is blue and yellow plaid; his vestitino (little coat) is really quite smart -- a tan linen with red stripes and red braiding around the edge -- and now this last bobbing addition to his costume. Remember he was a Sardinian donkey. Of course, it is impossible to get at him with the whip when he is thus arrayed, so we have to resort to yells and war-whoops to encourage him to activity. It is also true that when unannoyed he needs very little encouragement. He usually trots along at the precipitate pace of about four miles an hour. On one historic occasion, he did seven, but that was on a cold day and down hill all the way. Remembering how short his little legs were, you can easily see that he moved along pretty briskly.

The road from Montevarchi started nice and level (I speak now from Nanni's standpoint), along the flat, intensively cultivated valley of the Arno; but when we got to Levene, we hitched on behind a country cart by way of trapelo to get up to the hill-perched, clean little town of Bucine. A thickly-set mass of cream-yellow buildings with roofs of brownish tiling, rising on the crown of an olive-clad hill, an occasional cypress tree breaking the monotony of neutral tints. Through the precipitous streets of smooth slate flagging, we scrambled behind that all too rapid cart and



brought up at the very, very nice little inn kept by Giulia Cordelli. # This was a type of what a country tavern should be. Scrupulously clean, tastefully furnished, delicious food and efficient, courteous, friendly service. Father and Mother Cordelli were sweet old dears, whose only carking care seemed to be that their energetic daughter refused to enter the bonds of matrimony. They individually and collectively confided this to us and anxiously asked our advice, which, as we had neither of us ever accomplished matrimony ourselves, we felt that we were not particularly fitted to give. Both of the old people went down to the stable to see Nanni harnessed, and to wish us buon viaggio. Seldom have we taken from any place pleasanter memories of sunlit space, of clear, thin air, of courteous hospitality, than we did from this simple, undramatic little town of Bucine.

Then, along through a sweet, homely country of golden grain and silver olives, crossing the River Ambra at Pogi; and after that, following the cultivated slope of the hills along the river. It was an uneventful sort of country (for Italy) and even Nanni was beginning to be oppressed by the monotony of the outlook when, just before entering the hamlet of Capannole, we were passed by an exhilarated countryman in a little red cart drawn by a long-legged black donkey. This was more than the proud spirit of Nanni could bear without remonstrance, and off he leaped in pursuit. The man began to beat his donkey with a great cane, but Nanni's blood was up, the bit was firmly gripped in his teeth, and we kept closely behind our leader. All the inhabitants of Capannole came running to see the corso (race) and encouraged the contestants with shouts, whistles, and wavings of arms. I remember a dizzy

flight round an S curve over a little bridge, when we slewed in true automobile style. ¶ The peasant, much irritated that he could not distance us with his big donkey, and light cart, was really becoming cruel in his castigation of his unfortunate animal.\* Suddenly, the peasant's beast turned into the roadside and lay down! We left them thus amidst a jeering crowd of Capannellesi, -- Mr. Donkey lying flat on his tummy with a wicked gleam in his eye -- and the brutal driver fairly choking and dancing with rage, but withheld from further undue wielding of the whip by the strong contrary public opinion. We found throughout Tuscany none of the abuse of animals of which one hears so much. Usually the animals were treated at least as well as their owners fared themselves; frequently, better. This driver would not have dreamed of misusing his donkey had he not been rather tipsy from too enthusiastic sealing of some good bargain.

On a fern-clad rock rising from the river we passed soon after this adventure, a romantic little church quite by itself. At some time, there must have been a castle nearby and we speculated as to its probable date and ownership as we drove along by the brawling little river until, across a bridge at a turn of the road, we rolled into the town of Ambra. We drove confidently to the hotel which had been recommended to us, only to find that the four brothers to whom it belonged, being unmarried, had had so much trouble with women servants, that they had closed their inn until at least one of them should marry and so

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\*"Why didn't we stop?" the reader asks?

Because we couldn't. Nanni was running away.



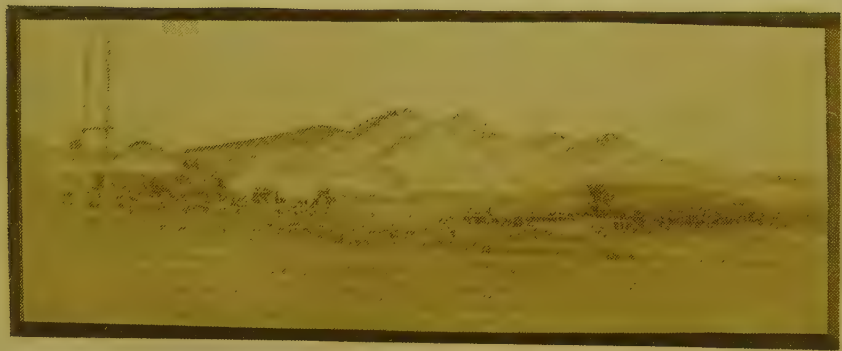
secure a woman in the family to manage things. Evviva il femminismo! as the rare Italian suffragette would say. Nanni and the carriage, they could care for, however, and they sent a stable-boy to guide us to the appalto of "Lanino", where we found a nice big room entered by a special outside stone stairway all to itself. ¶ The women of Ambra do not need the vote, apparently; they rule without it. For, also at this house, Lanino could only show us the clean airy room furnished by a bare bed, two chairs and two huge chests. The bed could not be made up till the women returned from a visit they were making at a neighboring podere. He offered, however, to prepare dinner for us, as he always did the cooking for the family. He said that we could have anything we fancied in the way of meat. So we ordered soup and bifstek with vegetables, salad and fruit; and went out to see the picturesque, up-and-down town, which irregularly covered the top of a precipitous mass of rock ~~which~~ rising abruptly from the river-bank. ¶ The streets zigzagged up and down or, becoming impatient, made sudden ascents and descents in the form of great stone stairways; then would return to their original career of being streets. The town was seething with excitement as our arrival had stirred the population to its depths; and then, on top of that, a new harmonium arrived and had to be engineered up the streets (?) to the church. We got as excited over this feat as if we had been Ambresi born and bred; and became exceedingly friendly with the townspeople. ¶ We were asked into two houses where we were questioned as to America, applauded for our energy in travelling without a man, and regaled with vinello, a drink somewhat resembling our grape-juice, although dif-

ferently made. Only the very poor use vinello. After the juice has been crushed from the grapes and strained off, water is poured over the pulps and residue, thoroughly mixed and allowed to stand a few days. Then the pulp is again crushed; the juice, which is, of course, mostly water, is drawn off and treated like wine. It is a sufficiently refreshing drink, but at this season a bit vinegary in flavor. ¶ Two large cows were being led about the town and the more opulent housewives lay in wait along the route armed with pitchers and mugs into which the foaming liquid was milked directly from the cow. We engaged a litro of the rich looking milk to be delivered at the appalto the next morning. It was a lucky stroke, for had we not done so, we should only have had the choice of goat or sheep milk -- neither of which I could abide on account of their loathsome odor.

¶ At about eight, we returned to the appalto for dinner, only to find that our host had been unable to procure any meat in town, nor even any eggs. After promising us everything, too! With a good deal of insistence and an unlimited flow of conversation, we finally induced a youth to go on his bicycle to the neighboring hamlet of San Martino to bring us something to eat from there. In the course of time, he returned, after having exhausted the commissary possibilities of San Martino, with five eggs and a basket of cherries. Thus, eventually, we had a very good meal, having brought mushrooms and sweet peppers and lettuce with us from Montevarchi.

The bed linen, when the wife and mother of the domesticated Lanino returned and consented to produce it, was wonderful.





The clay hills near Siena.



Sienese oxen.

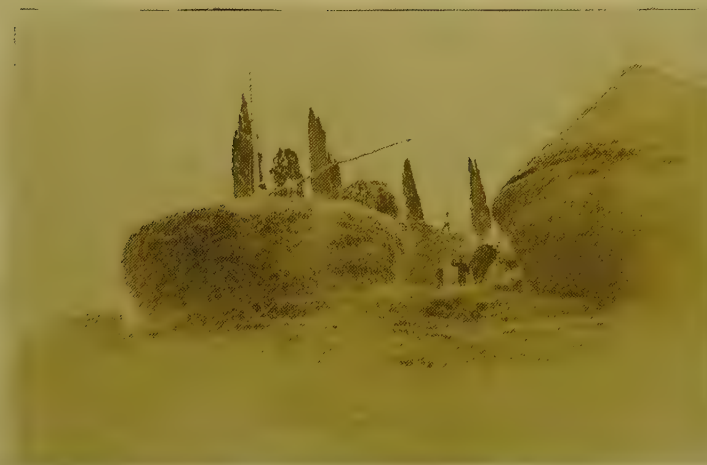
Very coarse hand-woven canapa (how it did scratch!) but beautifully embroidered with flowers and scrolls and the greatest amount of literature I have ever seen in a similar position -- Buona/notte; buon riposo; Sogni felice;\*and other like remarks. It was part of the corredo of the sposa (Lanino's wife -- we never discovered their last name, by the way). We took all those gentle admonitions to heart and slept beatifically in that scrupulously clean room.

Our ride the next day was the longest and dullest of any during the summer. Fortunately the weather was glorious with clear bright sunlight, still not too hot. And Nanni was feeling particularly lively. For a while, our way lay through partly wooded, low hills. Then we entered upon the clay country about Siena. <sup>F</sup> This country has a repellant, arid aspect. The earth is grey, the olives dun-colored. The scrub-oak and acacia of the uncultivated parts were dusty and forlorn looking. The grain and hay had all been gathered and the dry stubble on the dull clay gave a blasted, hopeless expression to the fields. An occasional stone-pine or group of cypress trees standing black against this colorless landscape struck almost clamorously on the senses; and the shining dark of ilex trees clustered about the rare ville gave a sinister air of secrecy, of somber evil, even to these undoubtedly peaceful dwellings. There was nothing in the contours of either hill or valley to fire with enthusiasm even the most appreciative of travellers. <sup>H</sup> Still, as we were coming into a new country, there were human touches to arouse our interest. The women working in the fields whom we -----  
\*Good night; good repose; happy dreams.





A typical Tuscan farm yard.



Making the great hay-stacks so characteristic  
of this country.

passed in the morning had blue or red kerchiefs over their heads; while those we saw in the afternoon all wore the flapping wide-rimmed straw hats peculiar to the Sienese contadina. We came into brick as building material, instead of stone. Also there were the magnificent great white Sienese oxen to be met everywhere along the road; enormous, gentle beasts with widely branching horns and beautiful eyes, far more docile in spite of their size and strength, than is our naughty little Nanni. Their yokes and carts are painted a vivid red,-- the latter often decorated with brightly colored vines and flowers, such as never grew on land or sea. It is the custom here to keep the fodder in great stacks instead of in barns, as we do. Of course, with such huge cattle, they need a great deal of hay. On some of the farms we passed they were just making these stacks, a steam-engine being used to lift the masses of hay.

In this country we also found more detached groups of farm buildings. Generally in Italy the people all live in towns frequently walking ~~many~~ miles to work in their fields; but here in Senese we passed many isolated farm houses, all of the same general type; -- usually of grey or reddish brick, unevenly plastered over, and with neutral tinted tile roofs,-- great hay and straw stacks standing near, the gaily painted farm implements and wagons all about them. These latter and the display of rural well-being in the great upstairs loggie, were the only color about. But such color! The loggie, almost always with pots of pinks, of basilica and myrtle between the arches, glowed with the warm tints of garlands of yellow seed-corn, strings of garlic and of red



peppers hung against the walls; sheaves of golden grain, piles of vividly orange pumpkins; trays of scarlet tomatoes drying in the sun to make the conserve so necessary to garnish the national dish of pasta\* during the winter; peaches, and other fruits placed along the brick parapet to ripen; -- the whole glowing with hues redolent of country plenty, and as striking to the eye in this drab, ash-colored landscape as is a Della Robbia chapel in a dull calcimimed church.

At one of these peasant houses we stopped for luncheon, and mid-day rest. Most of the farms hereabouts are run on the mezzeria system -- that is, the peasant farmer and the proprietor or owner of the land divide the harvest; a certain fixed number of eggs, poultry, sheep or goats being paid the owner each year, while he has to provide all farm implements, young trees and vines for planting, repairs on buildings, etc. It is said to be the best and most all-round just method of running large rural estates. Of course, to an individualistic American, it seems that for each farmer to own his fields would be better. But these are not American farmers, but Italian peasants; so I suppose no foreigner can safely draw conclusions.

This house where we stopped for luncheon was a new building with large windows and wide airy corridors and stairs. It housed three families, sons of the recently dead mezzadro (head farmer) and their wives and children. They were all very

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\*Any form of maccheroni or spaghetti.



View from a country house near Siena.



Towered Siena ever on the horizon.



decently clad and there seemed to be a sort of rude plenty. The bed-room which was hastily prepared for us had four beds, several bureaus and two large chests, some chairs and a washstand in it. Gay, hand-woven bed-spreads were thrown over all but one of the beds. That was prepared for our mid-day lie-down by lace-edged, fantastically embroidered sheets and pillow cases -- also of hand-woven material, of course. The towels were portentous affairs, a yard and a half long, such as we should use for luncheon cloths, so elaborate was the deep lace on each end and the intricate stitchery which nearly covered the linen. These more than adequate provisions for drying one's self were in ludicrous contrast to the meagre outfit for getting wet, which resembled rather what an American porcelain dealer would describe as a "cereal set for a child."

We had a very good luncheon here served at the end of the cool, airy corridor. Minestrina, which is bouillon with a very thin sort of spaghetti called barba di cappucini (Franciscan's beard) because it is the least expensive of paste and thus proper food for those vowed to poverty. After this came piccioni al cacciatore, a rich stew of pigeons; salad and coffee. If I seem to lay too much stress upon food, it is not altogether because I take "an unmaidenly interest" in all pertaining to the table (as has been said), but because before we started on our trip, this was a principal theme of discouraging predictions by friends and family, and I would reassure on this point anyone who may wish to take a walking or donkey tour in Italy.

All day long the far-off city of Siena had been playing

hide-and-seek with us among the clay hills. A fairy dream it seemed to our impatience, half hidden, half revealed by the golden veil which distance seems always to draw about its towered charms. Always it seemed that we must get there soon, and ever, at each turn in the road, at every hill over-passed, it seemed to withdraw to more unattainable, shimmering distance.

We had planned to stop that night at Taverna d'Arbia; but, when we arrived there at about seven in the evening, it struck us as so uninviting a hamlet that we hired a trapelo and pushed on to Siena. Our trapelante was a half-grown lad of the cocky age when no suggestions as to conduct are gracefully received; and he insisted upon riding on the trapelo horse, which annoyed Nanni (though why it should have done so we could not surmise) and frightened the horse. ¶ We arrived in Siena by the gate farthest from our pensione, and so had to traverse the whole length of the city. For days the town had been plastered with posters announcing the coming of a circus and, quite naturally, with our cavourting trapelo and would-be centaur of a trapelante, with gaily clad Nanni (acting very badly) and canopied carriage, we were mistaken for the mountebanks, and everyone followed us and made such remarks as only a Latin crowd could make! We pretended to pay no attention and talked English together; but when, in the middle of the city, the trapelo made a bolt down a side street and Nanni decided to go into a convenient (but private) stable, we both jumped out. I seized Nanni, and shook him (an infallible method of reducing him to order), while the Signorina fell upon the trapelante with as good an imitation of vituperation as so sweet a little person as she can arrive at. Then a long figure loomed through the



crowd, and I recognized with joy Adamo, who had driven me around and about Siena during my every visit there. Then our troubles were over. Somehow, Nanni and the trapelo, we and the crowd, were disentangled; the homelike Pensione Santa Caterina was reached without further incident; and behold, we were settled in Siena, the first real resting place on our trip.







*Facing page.*

*Top.* Nanni the donkey, in a photograph dated 1928.

*Middle.* Adelaide Pearson, n.d.. *Bottom.* House at 84 Union Street, Blue Hill, c. 1910.

*This page.*

Letter to Pearson from Elizabeth Waring.

6<sup>th</sup> January 1921

Dear Private & mine -  
This is just a little note  
of affection and good wishes  
to speed you on your way - and  
the bottle wrapped here with  
is to keep you and Miss Field  
well and cheerful - during your  
"creek" across the water -  
that delicious sunny land  
where I hope your health and  
strength will come back to you  
I cannot tell you how much  
I shall miss you! You are  
in my thoughts much often

## Chapter 3 Afterword

### The end of the manuscript

As the reader was warned, the story ends abruptly in Siena and the final words in the manuscript ("...the first real resting place on our trip.") make it quite clear that the trip was far from over. So, why did the manuscript end there and in that way? In the first chapter, on page 35, Adelaide indicated that they ended the trip where they started, in Florence. The wording of the first chapter leads this reader to assume that Adelaide's intent was to write about the entire trip. Why didn't she? We'll never know, however this writer believes that the existing manuscript was the initial part of a planned much longer work about the entire three month trip as indicated in the opening chapter. But with the final leg from Siena to Florence missing, we will never learn the fate of Nanni or the cart. (But we know Nanni lived a long life from the photograph dated 1928 on the previous page.) And, both those items would have needed to be resolved to fully satisfy the curiosity of most readers of the tale (including this one). There is also no summary of the feelings, emotions or memories of Adelaide or her companion at having completed this adventure.

Why the story was never completed is not clear. The account of the trip was carefully typed and corrected in manuscript form. So it was never written to be just one of Pearson's travel scrapbooks. And the photographs were carefully inserted in the manuscript. Clearly the manuscript went through some rigorous review as indicated by the penciled editing changes. Perhaps Pearson, after failing to find a publisher simply put it aside, while planning to complete it, and ultimately abandoned it. However she obviously valued it and kept it all her life. It was secured with a shoelace and carefully wrapped in order to keep the pages together.

Whatever the reason, the story ends in an incomplete fashion but our fascination does not. Even with the realization that, at best, the manuscript is only half of a story, even this half remains satisfying for a number of reasons. *Two in Tuscany* gives readers of the twenty-first century a window into a time past. The focus on the rural way of life, the descriptions of travel before motorcars, and the depiction of towns now either gone or greatly transformed during the ensuing century leave us with a vivid picture of what that part of the world was then. The description of the character of the donkey, Nanni, justifies the dedication of the manuscript to him and is altogether charming and entertaining. The narratives on the ubiquitous silk industry in that part of Italy at the time are very revealing and historically enlightening. And finally the picture of the then peaceful and beautiful part of the world where visitors could (and did) come to enjoy the simple pleasures found there is unforgettable. There is also nostalgia, since those sunny peaceful days of Europe described in this charming tale remind us of what life was like there before the half century of violence and discord that shortly engulfed all of Europe. While peace has returned to Tuscany, the way of life described in this manuscript has long since disappeared.



*This page and facing page.* Photographs by  
Adelaide Pearson. From her 1921 trip to Italy.



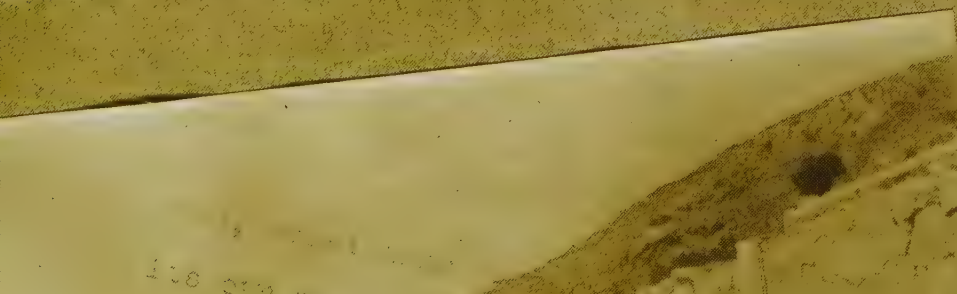




Treasury of the  
Athenians.



Stoa of the  
Athenians.



its own music to such an extent that every now and then a musician would himself fall a-dancing. And all in grassy hollows. The charm of it quite beggars description.

But before we could really get into the heart of it, Mitsui, our faithful agogiates (muleteer) came to us and told us that Germany had declared war on Russia and France; and that England also would soon fight. How on earth he found all this out goodness knows, for we were a great, great many miles from anywhere in particular and there were not only no post or telegraph, but not even any roads to facilitate communication. Of course we didn't exactly believe him but, still, we decided that we'd better hasten back to civilization (save the mark!); and hastily scrambled up on our horses and hastened back to Metsovo. Gathering up our belongings we were soon off on the trail towards Janina. Our intention was to go from Janina by steam or sail boat across the teamer.





## Adelaide Pearson's Later Life

The maelstrom of World War I engulfed the continent only two years later, and interestingly, Adelaide Pearson was in northern Greece in 1914 when the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated and war was declared. Her account of the frantic trip that she and her companions made to return home survives and is as harrowing as *Two in Tuscany* is charming. *Getting Home* is her tale of that journey from northern Greece, through Italy and France to England where, with great relief, she embarks on a ship back to Boston. The chaos and descriptions of the early disruptions of that war, over some of the same areas she had traversed only a couple of years earlier contrasts vividly with the charming, leisurely and peaceful time described in *Two in Tuscany*. (The *Getting Home* manuscript survives in the files at Rowantrees Pottery.)

*Facing page and this page.* Photographs and manuscript, Adelaide Pearson. Both are from the 1914 trip to Greece. The photograph above is also from that trip.





*This page.* Adelaide Pearson in her Red Cross uniform

*Bottom of facing page.* Adelaide's photograph of the political rallies on her visit to Italy in 1921. The letter reproduced is from Laura Bertolini to Adelaide's father.



When World War I came, Pearson actively participated in the war effort in several ways, largely by drawing on her enthusiasms for things practical. Never one to shy away from adventure and having mastered driving automobiles she served as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross and also organized the making of bandages and dressings for the war effort in Boston.

Resuming her travels, Pearson returned to Italy after World War I ended and we know some details about a trip in 1921 there from surviving letters from Adelaide to her father and one from her then current traveling companion, Caroline Field (as well as the one from Laura Bertolini quoted earlier). Also surviving are some of Adelaide's photographs of events (rallies) regarding the political activities of the then-nascent Fascist and Communist parties. Details about these events are mentioned in Bertolini's letter. It is sobering to realize that the seeds of Fascism were already sprouting in 1921. And, indeed, at that time Fascism and Communism were vigorously competing for the future of Italy with the Fascists winning.



You cannot come over  
I am sure you would  
enjoy Italy. - Lately  
Fascisti and Bonarri  
seem to behave better  
Adelaide has been able  
avoid them completely.  
We do not go down in  
Lan They sta





Letters Pearson wrote to her father also survive and describe what she observed of the terrible residue of World War I that still survived. It was still very visible to travelers. She wrote in graphic detail about the damage to, and the war debris that had been left on, the landscape of Europe and she commented on the war's horrific carnage that had been visited upon both the landscape and the population.



TELEGRAMS: "UNTIPEABLE, PICCY, LONDON."  
CODE: WESTERN UNION.

THE STRAND HOTEL LIMITED,  
PROPRIETORS OF  
STRAND PALACE HOTEL  
REGENT PALACE HOTEL

REGENT PALACE HOTEL,  
PICCADILLY CIRCUS,  
LONDON, W.1

the horrible, horrible  
Chemin des Dames! The  
whole terrain for over  
60 miles & absolutely  
pitted & ruined - still  
scattered thickly with  
shells & "grenades" with  
ends of uniforms &  
guns & lorries; and  
where great swarms  
rained wire - all  
after three years of  
it, too. It  
seemed to me

on purpose to keep the  
in spirit alive. Certainly  
+ where American  
its have come  
the re-building  
the

cause being  
we to pay  
interest on  
debts - especially  
can - that they  
of Vaux is  
labeled as having  
destroyed by  
gun-fire.

looked like some  
of political propa-





Not only did Pearson continue to travel after World War I, she showed enthusiasm for traveling to more and more remote locales. Perhaps her success in escaping from Greece had given her a delicious sense of adventure. Her travels included extended trips to Morocco, Palestine and Egypt. She was in Egypt in the early 1920s when some of the great tomb discoveries were made, and her photographic scrapbooks contain documentation of these events and other places that she visited. Some of her photographs from this trip are reproduced on the following pages. And, they are only a very small sampling of what is in the scrapbooks. They make it abundantly clear, as do her notes and written records of her trips, that she enjoyed adventure and seemingly did not mind the frequent absence of civilized comforts.

*Facing page.* Letters from Pearson to her father describing the devastation she saw on a trip across France and Italy in 1921.

*This page.* Photographs by Pearson from her 1922 trip to North Africa and Egypt. Selma is Selma Erving (daughter of her friend Dr. Emma Lootz Erving), Grace is Grace H. Saunders.





Since these trips and subsequent ones resulted in a great trove of photographic material, she kept selected and annotated photographs in leather bound photographic albums. As an accomplished photographer her trips resulted in wonderful voluminous scrapbooks of photographs of her destinations. (Others remained in loose collections.)

In the 1920s and early 30s, she used her travels as the basis of some juvenile writings, mostly unpublished. But one of her books titled *The Laughing Lion* was published.<sup>17</sup> (Interestingly, the book was published by the family firm of Vida Dutton Scudder; E. P. Dutton & Co.) However there are some wonderful, but unpublished, examples of her writings in the archives at Rowantrees.<sup>18</sup> It seems after the publication of her book, she wrote less and less about her trips, and focused more and more on photographing and then later, making movies of them.

17 Adelaide Pearson: *The Laughing Lion and other Stories*, illustrated by Winifred Bromhill, 1922, New York, E.P. Dutton & Company.

18 Pearson later wrote a series of children's stories for a course in children's literature that she enrolled in through an Columbia University extension program. These stories are full of her inimitable wit and verve. These included the Stories of Art Objects, Karlsni and the Snake who became New (a story about a snake and a rabbit who bond and voyage to a new world), Akaev keeps Faith (entrusted with a great jewel, a young boy has a harrowing journey in the desert) Anpu, The Green Fish and Blue Haired Fairy (a story set in and along the Nile River where the boy turns into a fish), and The Fairy Bell of Nola. While all remain unpublished, they are delightful in the manuscript format and are in the Rowantrees archive.





*These two pages.* More photographs from Pearson's 1922 trip. Also shown is the hand tooled leather cover of one of her photographic scrapbooks that she kept to preserve her photographs of her travels.

*The next two pages.* Her photographs showing the opening of some of the tombs of the pyramids.







Feb 3.

"Typhonian"  
beast being  
brought from  
Tomb of Tutankhamen,  
Valley of the Kings  
Thebes - Egypt.

Calend





Carter

Carnoven



... and Grace H. Saunders.

on. Nov. 7th. Bluenhill. Adelaide and I drove to Bangor early. Fetched the three pairs of deer-skin tall boots from the factory, at ten dollars each, but found another pair for - of rough material, so she had to buy a pair of white ready-made shoes. On the way A. found the front wheels chimmying, and had to be adjusted, and even the small amount of oil in the engine had fallen and very painful.

... from England, ...

... the ...

... of us ...

... the ...

...

... the ...



**This page.** The first page of text by Grace H. Saunders from the account of the 1932-1933 trip to South America, through the Panama Canal and up the coast of Mexico to California.

**Photographs this page.** Top, Grace H. Saunders and unknown woman. Bottom, Emma Lutz Erving. Top of facing page. Photograph of the three women, Saunders, Pearson and Erving as they set out on the trip.





## Her Photographic Scrapbooks and Films

When Pearson decided to let others write while she took photographs or movies, it did not seem to lessen the amount of documentation about her trips. It simply shifted her role. One example of this shift is found in the record of the trip she took in the winter of 1932-1933 to the Atlantic side of South America and Central America, through the Panama Canal and then up the Pacific Coast with stops in Central America and Mexico, before finishing up in Los Angeles and San Francisco. On that trip, which she undertook with friends Grace H. Saunders, and Dr. Emma Looz Erving, the writing of the diary was done by Grace Saunders while Adelaide contented herself with the photographs and movies.<sup>19</sup> Many of her negatives and most (if not all) of her photographic albums have been preserved in the Rowantrees archives. Her films are now in the Northeast Film Archives and are available in digital format. With the wealth of documentation that has been preserved we can see just how extensive her travels were and examine them in great detail.

She accomplished many things in a long and rich life; however it is clear that traveling was a great passion of hers, perhaps her greatest passion. (This obsession with traveling continued even after she was confined to a wheelchair in her 80s.) On the following pages are some details of selected trips that have been extensively documented on film and in photographic prints.

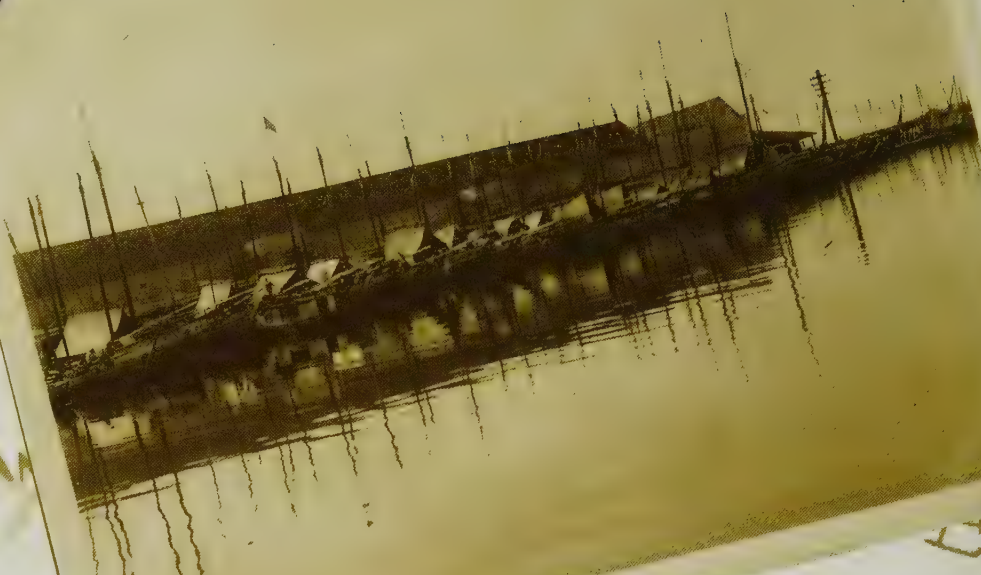
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<sup>19</sup> The diary and photographs are in the Rowantrees archives. The movies, now in a digital format, are in the Northeast Film Archives. (Reels, 6, 7 & 8)



SAN FRA

LOS AN



MEXICO

NEW ORLEANS

*Gulf of Mexico*

GUADALAJARA

MEXICO CITY

MANZANILLO

GUATEMALA

HONDURAS

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

CHAMPERICO

ACAJUTLA

LA UNION

AMAPALA

CORINTO

COSTA RICA

This map is the route of the 1932-1933 trip to South America, through the canal and up the coast of Mexico to California.

Photographs are by Adelaide Pearson.





ORK



BBEAN  
SEA

PUERTO CO  
CARTAGENA

VENEZUE





H a i f a

Entrance  
to  
German  
Hostel

Apparently Adelaide enjoyed her first trip to North Africa very much because in 1933 she again visited the region, going to what was then British administered Palestine that would later become Syria. Later in that decade she went on a couple of monumental trips around or to far corners of the world. In 1936 she went south to Florida and then on to Tahiti, Fiji, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and finally on to Liberia in West Africa.



on  
three  
languages

Buying donkey

*This page:* A page of photographs from the 1933 trip to Palestine.

*Facing page:* A page from the Pottery Notebooks kept by Laura Paddock on the 1938-1939 trip to England and the Far East when they research pottery making. Adelaide Pearson photographs, text by Laura Paddock.





### Benares Potter.

I try my hand and survey  
my feeble effort. I  
find that the wheel re-  
volves steadily - and  
that it isn't so hard  
as it looks to get down  
on the ground. The  
crowd was vastly amused  
at my struggles.



### Benares Potter.

The Kiln! The mound  
in the foreground -  
bricks on end for  
ventilation - earth  
on top. The basket  
will carry the pots  
to market next day on  
top of someone's head.



In the winter of 1938 and spring of 1939, Pearson with her companion Laura Paddock, took an extended trip around the world starting in England where they visited potteries. She and Paddock then went on to India where they attended the All Women's Conference, and Pearson, while there, captured Gandhi, both in photographs and on film. The latter are some of the earliest images of that iconic figure that exist.

This particular trip combined two of Pearson's current interests, that of improved social standing for women and insights or models for the making of pottery as the two women had recently moved the making of pottery from the hobby stage into the realm of a business and were searching for useful models to follow. The recently established Rowantrees Pottery that she and Paddock had created was floundering and they were struggling to move it in the right direction. The trip was intended to give them some useful insights.





This interesting album of photographs taken by the misses Paddock and Pearson shows fascinating scenes of the far East. I may miss seeing Mrs. Paddock this morning, if so would you please return this album and wish her goodbye from me. Thanks

After India, the women then continued on to (then) French Indochina (visiting Bangkok and Ankor Wat) before going to Japan and China. As this was just before World War II the tensions of that coming conflict were already evident, and as China was already partially occupied by Japan, Pearson's photographs and films provide vivid indications of the coming conflict. This trip resulted in a number of films and numerous photographs of pottery making in the various localities and after she returned home, the material was used in a series of educational lectures and provided to schools for showing to students.



***This page.*** Photographs from the 1938-1939 trip around the world researching pottery making. Along with this photograph of Gandhi, Pearson took some of the earliest known motion pictures of Gandhi. Also included are some photographs showing occupied China.

***Facing page.*** Photographs of Paddock in the Far East when they researched pottery making.





When World War II broke out a year later, travel to Europe, the Middle East and the Far East became impossible. But Pearson's travels did not stop; she merely shifted her destinations to accessible locations. She began spending winters in Mexico, and visiting Guatemala as well. Those two locales were to become her favored destinations after the war. By the late 1940s she was in her 70s and so one marvels at the determination she displayed about traveling. She continued, although her preferred mode of travel shifted to trains and motorcars.

While travel was one of the major parts of Pearson's life, it was not the only thing she was interested in. When she was a young woman (living near Boston) she filled her non-traveling days with social work. This was true later in life, but after she moved to Blue Hill, the focus of her efforts to improve the lives of people less fortunate than she became centered on the permanent residents of that community.

But, outside of her focus on Blue Hill, another constant in her adult life was her attachment to the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, an Episcopalian group of laywomen, spiritually-minded and socially involved, committed to bettering the lives of others. Pearson was active in the Companions, contributed to the movement and to the retreat of the Companions, Adelynrood and attended functions there annually.



The Common Room



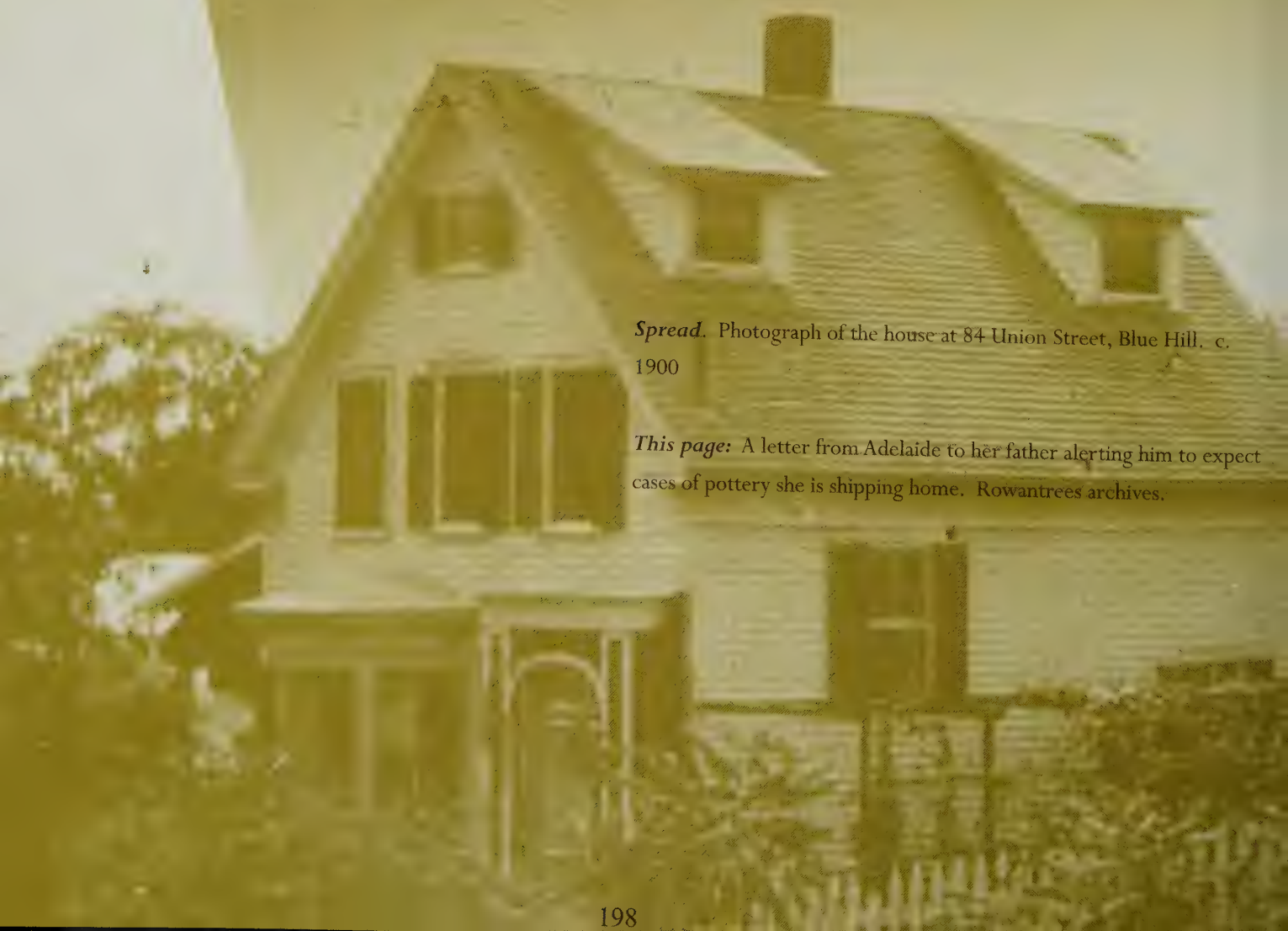


*This page.* Photographs of Mexico and South America by Adelaide Peck

*Facing page.* Photograph of Adelynrood Common ruin



freight & other charges as they are. I wish  
 they might not be have to pay any custom  
 charges, but sometimes things run differently.  
 I shall soon be sending some cases  
 of pottery - Sicilian & Italian - have  
 but imagine they won't arrive till  
 after I do.  
 Be sure to keep me posted  
 about the fuzes & everything.  
 Lovingly  
 Adelaide



*Spread.* Photograph of the house at 84 Union Street, Blue Hill. c.  
 1900

*This page:* A letter from Adelaide to her father alerting him to expect  
 cases of pottery she is shipping home. Rowantrees archives.



## Blue Hill and the House at 84 Union Street

In 1928 Adelaide Pearson moved into her grandparents home on Union street in Blue Hill, Maine, and made it her permanent home. Blue Hill was, and is, a very small village at the head of Blue Hill Bay. While the summer residents and visitors swelled the population and brought with them diverse social and cultural backgrounds, enriching the community during the summer months, it was a different place the remainder of the year. As she said many years later [in 1959] in a letter:

*When I first came here as a young girl I just did everything the other young girls did – went to parties, picnics, and so on, -- but when I inherited the house and began to settle in I realized that they really did have a hard time in winter. (I know that the stores had to carry most of the families in winter, but then in the summer there was more work, carpentry and all that. To this day we only have one real plumbing firm, because plumbing is comparatively new. I think my grandfather had the first bath-tub in Blue Hill.) But it seemed to me what they lacked more than anything else was not money but that they didn't enjoy beauty as beauty, and there is so much all around! So, in order to make them look at their own things (I was brought up on museums, art shows and all that. My father was one of the founders of the Art Club of Boston, and I have always been intensely interested in crafts.) I started a series of loan exhibits....<sup>20</sup>*

She then went on to say: "Everything I looked up in all the books available in the Museum of Fine Arts or in the Boston Library, and then I would borrow these books and make elaborate cards to go on everything."<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps as a result of this, Pearson subsequently became very active in the Blue Hill Library and began her strenuous efforts to successfully enhance its collections and services. These efforts culminated at the end of the 1930s when she was successful in leading a campaign that greatly enlarged and modernized the library with the help of a WPA grant. She donated artifacts and money to help enrich its holdings.

She extended her cultural efforts in another way, starting a program of summer art classes. In her own words:

*Well, after that, things that people had thought little of began to assume proper proportions and then in my efforts to bring art to Blue Hill I instituted a class in summer on handicrafts. (This was before the days of the Income Tax, I may say, when I had money enough to do these things.) The class was free to anybody in Hancock County and the materials were free. I had, well, ultimately I think, I had as many as five teachers because they taught drawing, both from life and from moving pictures which I would take, you know, and throw on the screen here in my barn, and clay modeling, and wood carving, ordinary carpentry (that is cabinet work) linoleum cuts, something of the drama every year. One year it might be a puppet show, and they would make the puppets, and dress them, and pretty much make the play. I would put in the words if there were any but they would do the rest. And the next year we might have a real play on the lawn out by the little brook that runs through my place, and another year it would be a different sort of drama, but always something of the drama....<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*



*This page.* Photographs from the summer art classes.

*Facing page:* Photographs of some of Pearson's extensive collection of artifacts collected during her travels. From an auction catalog for a sale after her death. Rowantrees archives.





It seems clear that after moving to Blue Hill Adelaide moved the energies she had previously devoted to social projects in the Boston area to Blue Hill and began her lifelong mission to improve the lives of the permanent residents and bring culture to the village.

Indeed, as there are a number of photographic albums and movies made of events at Blue Hill on the grounds of her house, we know a great deal about many of the activities of these years as they were recorded and these films and photographs are of considerable interest to historians. She also gave a number of lectures and illustrated talks employing the photographs, slides or films she had made on these trips.

Additionally, she collected art objects and brought them home where they subsequently were displayed in her house on Union Street in Blue Hill. She also used the objects for educational purposes.

She based her philosophy of collecting on:

*... the idea of choosing objects for educational purposes to represent their respective cultures. She did not look for particularly rare pieces, for the avant-garde, or for works that transcended time or were valued primarily for formal aesthetic reasons. Nor was market value her goal. Rather she saw objects as sources of information, reflective of the religion, history, daily life, and craftsmanship of a people and her collecting was done methodically with that goal in mind.* <sup>23</sup>



A large part of her collection was given to Colby College after her death and much of the rest was sold in the mid 1970s at auction, but some of the things she collected had previously been donated to the Blue Hill Public Library, where they survive and are on display.



## Rowantrees Pottery

After she began offering the free summer art classes to the local residents on the spacious grounds of her home, they proved so popular that she turned the old carriage house into a gallery for these classes. And, when the students wanted to have some of their clay projects fired, Adelaide built a ceramic kiln. In turn, when some of the summer folk began to buy the ceramic pieces, Adelaide and her new partner, Laura Paddock (who had come to Blue Hill to teach pottery to those summer classes), decided (in 1934) to establish a pottery that they named Rowantrees Kiln and later renamed Rowantrees Pottery. The pottery was initially formed with the idea of putting some of Ruskin's ideas about the value of craft work into practice and its original purpose was to provide year round employment for the residents of Blue Hill.

However, even as she established a business enterprise in Blue Hill, that did not slow down her travels, although it certainly seemed to sharpen the focus of them. Her last grand trip around the world, the 1938-39 trip to England, India and the Far East described a few pages earlier was the result of the pottery initiative. And very interestingly, Pearson had foreseen the coming war (WWII) even before leaving on that trip, so before departing she had called a meeting of the workers at Rowantrees Pottery. In that meeting she told the workers that the coming war would cut off American department stores and shops from traditional suppliers of handcrafted pottery and that Rowantrees Pottery should be producing on a scale suitable to help fill the gap. ((Remarkably, her prepared notes for that meeting have survived and are in the Rowantrees Pottery archives.)

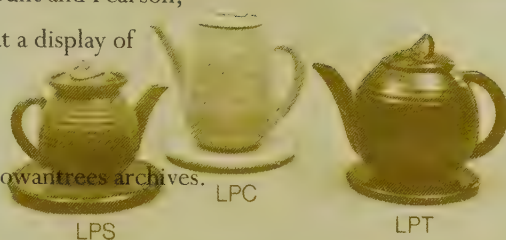
The pottery's early struggles with production problems paved the way to considerable success in the 1940s and with that success, its goals expanded beyond that of simply providing employment for local residents. While never making much (if any) money the pottery existed for 75 years, under the subsequent ownership of Laura Paddock and Sheila Yarnum, producing distinctive, functional earthenware pieces from local materials that are still avidly collected and are in the Smithsonian's Presidential China Collection.<sup>24</sup> In the process Rowantrees Pottery became a Blue Hill (and Maine) institutional landmark. The establishment of Rowantrees Pottery is perhaps the most significant accomplishment of Adelaide Pearson's many accomplishments.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on Rowantrees Pottery, see: *Following the Brick Path, the Story of Rowantrees Pottery*, Andrew L. Phelan, Quail Creek Editions, 2010



acing page. Photographs of the first kiln being built and Pearson,  
n the left, and Laura Paddock, second from right, at a display of  
Rowantrees Pottery in the 1940's.

This page. From a Rowantrees Pottery Catalog, Rowantrees archives.



LPS

LPC

LPT



CS IV

## rowantrees pottery

### ning of trees Pottery

Rowantrees Kiln, named for the  
ash trees above its green gate, was  
elaide Pearson, herself of Blue Hill  
e conceived it, first as a village  
a place where those interested in  
th their hands might find avocation  
re. It has long since, however, taken  
a dignity and a worth perhaps not  
arent in its beginning. For its  
ncouraged by Mahatma Ghandi,  
visited in 1939, became aware that  
g of pottery is too much bound up  
e of countless centuries in the most  
ds, from the hill towns of Italy to the  
Palestine, ever to be merely a  
t is instead an art, symbolic not only  
erial needs of mankind, but of its  
ell.



### The Pottery Handmade by Village Craftsmen from the Clay of Blue Hill

During the years since, the Rowantrees Kiln on  
one of Blue Hill's lovely old streets has become  
the magnet to thousands of visitors. They  
come from near and far to watch the dexterous  
and careful hands of native potters shape the  
clay on the wheel (for moulds are not tolerated  
in Blue Hill) and the equally skillful hands of  
those who apply the unique Rowantrees glazes  
to the vases and mugs and plates, bowls,  
pitchers, and cups, which have had their first  
baking in the hot fires of the kilns. They learn,  
too, of the riches waiting in Blue Hill's  
abandoned copper mines, in her quarries and  
bogs, ponds and seashore — granite,  
manganese, diatoms, copper and iron. These  
minerals, searched for and gathered by Laura  
Paddock, the first manager of Rowantrees, and  
her willing helpers, ground to a fine powder,  
lent to the local marine clay rich shades and  
depths of color rarely found elsewhere. The

making the Rowantrees Kiln and the  
Blue Hill known far and wide.

The craftsmanship, so happily and ca  
practiced in Blue Hill, is a very real e  
of the art of rural America. And mor  
like all art, an outward and visible sig  
inward and spiritual grace which, thro  
hands and the understanding of men  
our troubled times and makes us suc  
conscious that symmetry and beauty  
remain among us and suggest forev  
the values by which we live.

Sheila Varnum, one of Laura Paddoc  
helpers, and a potter at Rowantrees  
1940, now manages the continuatio  
art, tradition, and high quality which  
become synonymous with the potter  
Rowantrees.







OUR place is called "Rowantrees" because of the numberless rowans which wave their feathers through the woodlands, along the flower beds, above the lawns and even by the roadside. The rowan (European Mountain Ash) is not indigenous in Maine so we believe that our little brothers, the birds, brought the red seeds from the lush estates of Mount Desert Island. All across the north lands of Europe the rowans are credited with great magical powers. The Vikings always took a twig of Rowan, tied by a red thread, on their long ships. The north men of Scotland wore sewn to their clothes a similar amulet as powerful protection against the malignancy of heathen gods or, later, the moon-lit incantations of the wicked witches of heath and wood, of sea and rocks.

C. M. Yonge quotes many runes and rhymes such as

"Rowan tree and red thread  
Bind the witches — all in dread"

Or

"Woe to the land without a rowan tree gad"  
meaning, I gather, guard.

In Wales rowantrees grew in church yards (as they do in the "Old Cemetery" of Bluehill) and there exists an old engraving of Christ's descent into Hades. He holds a rowantree cross while releasing an imprisoned spirit.

Most of this sounds rather heathen for this time of year but there were some pretty stout Christians developed in that wild northern horde. Wild and bewildered we may be now in this restless world but there is always a "Way to peace". Let's follow it with or without a rowantree twig.



*Facing page.* A Rowantrees Pottery Christmas Card, Rowantrees archives.

*This page.* Adelaide in her wheelchair, taken in the last year of her life.



## Adelaide Pearson's final journey

In the fall of 1960, although in a wheelchair, Adelaide Pearson was still traveling, and she went to Mexico as she had done for so many years. She loved Mexico because: “...my great-uncle was a sea captain, owned his own boat, and he would freight up and down the coast and Boston in the summertime, and he owned a house in Vera Cruz and spent the winters there, so I was brought up on stories of Mexico. No wonder I return there in my old age year after year.”<sup>25</sup>

So when at the age of 85, she died in Mexico on her final annual winter trip it seemed, somehow, fittingly. She is buried in Cuernavaca, Morelia, Mexico.

The life that Adelaide Pearson was able to lead was in no small measure a reflection of the fortunate circumstances of wealth and privilege that she was born into, but it is interesting and a wonderful comment on her ideals that she combined a life that permitted such travel into a legacy that others can enjoy. Pearson's legacy is found in the ceramic wares from Rowantrees Pottery, in rooms and on the shelves of the Blue Hill Public Library, in her book, (*The Laughing Lion*), in the few photographs that appear in publications and in her films. Now, *Travels in Tuscany with a Donkey* is a part of that legacy available to the public. The rest of her legacy, the unpublished photographs and her other travel journals have yet to be made available public. But they are substantial and will be worth the wait.

---

25 Pearson, Letter to Beckwith

I am. - I suppose Adelaide  
wrote you about my short  
stay in Rome and the nice  
time she gave me there.  
Since then she has become  
even stronger, very fat  
and is looking extremely  
young and healthy. - Miss  
Field is sweet and dear and  
wonderful for her age, I think.  
Hereafter I shall write a little  
more often - in the meantime  
hurry to America! -  
With kind regards and  
sincere gratitude.  
Sincerely yours  
Laura Bertolini

Facing page. The mysterious money order

This page. Letter (1921) from Laura Bertolini to Adelaide's father.

Rowantrees archives.



ADVICE OF DEBIT

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF BOSTON  
BOSTON 6, MASSACHUSETTS

Your account is being CHARGED as described below:

Payment due today under the terms of our Special Credit #4320  
to Laura Mariani and/or Lucia Rambaldi, Florence  
\$10.00 comm. \$0.50

Date January 10, 1951

Foreign Division

\$ 10.50

MAIL TO → Miss Adelaide Pearson  
c/o Miss Laura S. Paddock, Atty.  
Rowantrees  
Blue Hill, Maine

D-897

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL 1

ADVICE OF DEBIT

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF BOSTON  
BOSTON 6, MASSACHUSETTS

Your account is being CHARGED as described below:

Payment due today under the terms of our Special Credit #4320  
to Laura Mariani and/or Lucia Rambaldi, Florence

Date January 2, 1951

Foreign Division

\$

## Postscript

As a footnote to the mystery of the identity of the *Signorina*, we will end on a note of ambiguity. In the Rowantrees archives there are a series of weekly receipts made out to transfer \$10.50 (US) weekly "Laura Mariani and/or Lucia Rambaldi" of Florence Italy dating for a number of years in the late 1940s and 1950s. Italy in the years after WW II faced some desperate economic times and so, to someone living in those circumstances, US \$10.00 per week would have been a generous gift and of considerable help. So, was the Laura Mariani receiving these payments, the same Laura Bertolini, (now with a married name perhaps) who wrote so affectionately to Mr. Pearson of Adelaide's return to Florence in 1921 in the letter that seemed to hint that she (Laura Bertolini, now Laura Mariani) was the mysterious *Signorina* who accompanied Adelaide on the trip by donkey cart described in *Two in Tuscany*? Perhaps. It would seem from that letter that Laura Bertolini and Adelaide Pearson had a strong emotional bond. While no additional correspondence has been found that clarifies the relationship or the reason for the payments, this writer believes she was indeed the same person. However, we probably will never know.

## BLUE HILL

### Adelaide Pearson

Miss Adelaide Pearson of Blue Hill died in Cuernavaca, Mexico on Dec. 12

Miss Pearson, daughter of the late Senator and Mrs. Charles H. Pearson, was born in Brooklin, Mass. April 26, 1875. She was the granddaughter of Lucy and Woodman Wheeler Newton of Blue Hill Maine.

As a social worker, world traveler, lecturer, writer, archeologist, and musician she spent a very busy life. Miss Pearson was a social worker with the

Children's Aid Society in Boston, did social settlement work at the Denison House, in 1906 organized Folk Handicrafts for the benefit of non English speaking immigrants and in 1907 began similar work at the South End House. She studied violin with Marsick in Paris and with Joachim in Berlin. She wrote stories for children and was an experienced archeologist, working in many different parts of the world.

Miss Pearson was a world traveler, having made two trips around the world, as well as spending many winters in the West Indies, Virgin Islands, and Italy. She crossed the Sahara Desert with her own caravan and was the second woman to drive her own automobile across 800 miles of Mexican wilderness. She served in the Ambulance Corps in Europe during World War One. In all her travels, she collected objects of art for the main purpose of presenting them to the Blue Hill Library. The overflow of her famous collections have been given to the new art museum at Colby College. She was the founder and promoter of the Ladies Social Library of Blue Hill, making its first card catalog herself and donating many beautiful and educational works and exhibits brought from all over the world. In Blue Hill, Miss Pearson held art classes on her estate free to all in Hancock County from which has grown the famous Rowantrees Pottery. She did much for the Blue Hill Children and their schools in promoting art and culture.

She is survived by two cousins. In lieu of flowers a donation to the Ladies Social Library of Blue Hill, of which she was the president as long as her health permitted then president Emerita, would be a fitting tribute to one who held the library so dear to her heart.

*The Blue Hill*











# Selected Sources

## Articles and Books

Dzamba, Anne Olga, *Adelaide Pearson of Blue Hill, Maine*, a paper presented at the Woman's Caucus of the National Art Education Association at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, April 1985. *Women Art Educators II*, editors Mary Ann Stankiewicz and Enid Zimmerman.

Pearson, Adelaide, *The Laughing Lion and other Stories*, illustrated by Winifred Bromhill, 1922, New York, E.P. Dutton & Company.

Phelan, Andrew *Following the Brick Path, the story of Rowantrees Pottery*, Quail Creek Editions, 2010 ISBN 978-0-9788570-5-9

Tarr, Kimberly, *'Round the World and Back Again: Mapping the Cultural and Historical Significance of the Adelaide Pearson Film Collection*, unpublished master's thesis, NYU 2009

# Films

*(All have been transferred to digital format.) These are archived at the Northeast Film Archives and some are available at the Blue Hill Public Library.*

Pearson, Adelaide. November 1989. *Sheila Varnum collection* ID Number 0660. Northeast Historic Film, PO Box 900, 85 Main Street, Bucksport, Maine 04416-0900

Pearson, Adelaide. October 21, 1998. *Sheila Varnum collection* ID Number 1564. Northeast Historic Film, PO Box 900, 85 Main Street, Bucksport, Maine 04416-0900

Pearson, Adelaide. October 1990. *Blue Hill Public Library Collection* ID Number 0291. Northeast Historic Film, PO Box 900, 85 Main Street, Bucksport, Maine 04416-0900

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# About Quail Creek Editions

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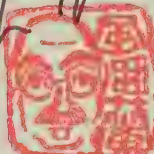


## Andrew L. Phelan, editor

An individual with many interests, Phelan has done a number of things during a varied career. In addition to editing this book, he has written four other books, organized 12 exhibitions, and published more than a dozen articles on art, crafts, history and studio art education that have appeared in several languages. Additionally, he has given numerous invited presentations in the US and abroad to various audiences. He was a professor for more than 30 years as well as serving as dean, director or chair of programs in higher education. His public service included work on a number of accreditation teams, panels, juries and committees and as consultant to departments of education for several states and to the UN. He also worked as a consultant to an international company. Dr. Phelan has traveled professionally to many places in the US as well as to China, England, France, Korea, Spain, Mexico, Japan, Israel and the Caribbean. Phelan has exhibited in New York and elsewhere and has participated in a number of innovative multimedia projects. His current projects include working on two biographies, one of an artist, the other of a craftsman.

Phelan was educated at the Pratt Institute [BS, MFA] and at New York University (PhD).

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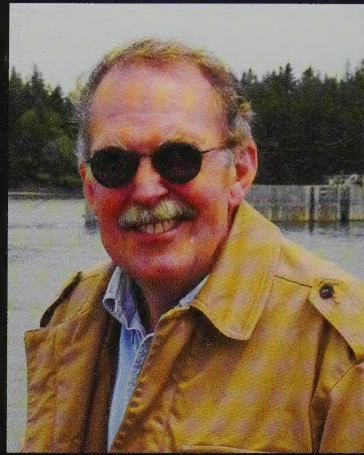
*Andrew* 











Andrew L. Phelan, Editor.

Writer, educator and artist, Phelan found Adelaide Pearson's manuscript while researching his book on Rowantrees Pottery, *Following the Brick Path*. Drawing on his diverse skills, he envisioned the format of this book as a form worthy of showcasing the multifaceted talents of Adelaide Pearson.





From the archives of Rowantrees Pottery comes this delightful story of two women traveling by donkey cart in the hills of Tuscany in 1912. Never published, the story has remained hidden for almost a century.

This story was written by the founder of Rowantrees, Adelaide Pearson (1875-1960) and has never been published, existing only in its original manuscript form. The book contains a faithful reproduction of that manuscript as well as biographical material and many photographs giving the reader fascinating details of the long, exciting and adventuresome life of Adelaide Pearson. Author, photographer, cinematographer, social activist and entrepreneur, she left a wonderful legacy of accomplishments. Among them was this unpublished manuscript.

It will delight readers of all ages.

